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CÆDMON'S VISION
AND OTHER POEMS

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CÆDMON'S VISION
AND OTHER POEMS



CÆDMON'S VISION

AND OTHER POEMS

BX

SARSON C. J. INGHAM

AUTHOR OF

"THE WHITE CROSS AND DOVE OF PEARLS," "SELINA'S STORY,"
"LAURA LINWOOD," ETC.

LONDON

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DEDICATION.

TO THE REV. BENJAMIN GREGORY.

To you, whose ear tuned for the Ionian lyre,
Is ne'er intolerant of the shepherd's reed,
If but the voice according be well-keyed
And raised for joy and duty, I desire
To dedicate these lyrics and confess
A deeper gratefulness than words express.

Nor would I seek expression : being fain
To lay upon the desk o'er which you lean
The silent tribute of a few flowers seen
Amid the Muse's walks, where I in vain
Have sought to weave such garlands of delight,
As might bloom purely in a poet's sight.

Yet since the cluster of camphire may fling
An odour of the rose upon the wind,
I do not fear some favour I may find
For the small offering that I shyly bring—
So oft “I found your study door unlocked,”
Nor wrongly thought “you answered when I knocked.”



P R E F A C E.

I LIKE that old Icelandic metaphor which calls Poetry the language of the gods and the poet a songsmith. I like it because of the leap which the thought takes ; for though the sentiment of poetry may be universal, its expression is confined to a few. And of these few, those who possess in fullest measure the "gift divine" have had to nerve them for the "toil divine," and to forge at a white heat, as if to prove that the language of the gods can never, any more than the divine attributes of goodness, come naturally to man, but must be the prize of earnestness and strong endeavour. Nevertheless, spontaneity is so much the privilege of the "humbler singers,"

"Whose songs 'gush' from the heart,
As rain from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start,"

as to be almost proportioned to their inferiority. There is music in the woodlark's song ; yet who would argue that the strains drawn by some great master from the majestic organ, with its diapason and its swell, the emotional capacities that lie hid in its stops, and the volumed utterances of its "many mouths of gold," would benefit by being evoked with the same careless freedom as that wherewith the bird unloosens the "liquid ditty" in its throat ?

If these simple, fervent framers of the Icelandic Edda had had more range for their comparison, they might have granted being to poets who are not songsmiths, and have enlivened their gloomy ash tree of existence (*Igdrasil*), whose roots struck deep down in the kingdom of Hela, or Death, with a kind of bird that "sings because it must," and has compass enough of note to vibrate the joy of life or vocalize with hope some of the shadows of death.

If that which is an endowment of Nature is to be regarded as a gift from God, the concern of any who would tremblingly say, "And I also am a poet," ought not to be to know that the gift is a great one so much as to know certainly that it

is a true one, for even this gift is bestowed in a widely varying degree ; but the obligation to "occupy" is upon all, from the holder of one talent to the holder of ten.

The conviction of this is the only apology I have to offer for bringing some of my poems afresh before the public. A collection of them from the various serials in which they have appeared was urged upon me. I have no doubt that those who have welcomed them before will welcome them again, and I trust that the new ones interspersed will be regarded with equal favour.

Secular or sacred, they have been scattered over a period of several years, for which reason some of them contain youthful allusions, while to "Claude" and "Annie" I have given touches which may seem unfamiliar to some who were partial to them on their first appearance.

My best thanks are due to the Editors of the Religious Tract Society, to Messrs. Isbister and Co., Messrs. Cassell, Petter and Galpin, and others, for their kind permission to reprint from the pages of periodicals edited and issued by them.

Also I must be allowed the pleasure of acknowledging here much obligation to my friend, the Rev. A. E. Gregory, of Hornsey, who stimulated me to the undertaking, and has assisted me in it, giving me also, in the choice and presentation of this collection, the benefit of his own literary taste and judgment.

It only remains now to leave this little book to take its chance with readers friendly or indifferent, as we put a seed into the ground in the hope that something may come of it; but we know that it may die away, and to keep continual watch over it would be tedious and dispiriting.

If, left to itself, it prospers, the first sign of it will take us as by surprise; if not, then the less we think about it the better.

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CÆDMON'S VISION.

ATTACHED to the Abbey of Whitby, about the year 680, was a cowherd of the name of Cædmon. Of course he was no scholar. He could not read, and his memory was badly furnished with the metrical lore which among his countrymen supplied the place of books. At the same time, he was so sensitive, that when, at a banquet, the guests began to regale one another with a song, rather than betray his ignorance, he used to get up and slink away. One evening, amidst a festive party, the dreaded harp was introduced, and as soon as it drew near his corner, the cowherd, as usual, rose, and in vexation sought the stable. Here, after feeding the cattle, he threw himself down on what was probably his ordinary couch, a heap of straw, and fell asleep. But the fatal harp haunted his dreams. He thought that a stranger accosted him and asked him to sing. He said, "I cannot, and that is the reason why I have just quitted my friend's table."

"But you can," replied the stranger.

"What, then," asked the cowherd, "would you have me to sing?"

"The Origin of all Things," returned the speaker; and immediately, in his dream, Cædmon found himself composing and singing a poem on Creation. When he awoke, he remembered his verses, and the affair soon came to the knowledge of the monks. They were so struck with Cædmon's performance that they invited him to assume the religious habit, and thence-

forward it was the business of his life to render into verse passages of Scripture on doctrines of divinity which his brethren taught him in plain prose, and then took down from his tuneful lips.—*From "Christian Classics," by James Hamilton, D.D.*

He had been merry with the guests
That gathered in the hall,
Had answered to the uncouth jests
Of freeman and of thrall.

And he had drunk their wild grape wine,
With full as much delight
As if the vintage had been fine
And sparkling to the sight.

But when they called for song and lyre,
In scorn he stood aside ;
His eyelids screened a sullen fire,
His bosom swelled with pride.

He waited not the minstrel's lay,
The throb of tuneful wires,
But to his brute-friends stole away,
And fed them in their byres.

"And this," he cried, "is all, is all
That Heaven requires of me,
To fodder these and cleanse the stall,
And labour patiently."

So down upon a bed of straw
His weary frame he flung,
A rebel 'gainst eternal law,
A thrall, oppression stung !

" Why should a harp disturb his mind ?
Why should a song affright ? "
In mournful pauses asked the Wind,
With holy eyes, the Night.

" Shall Cædmon, then, no strain entrance,
That links its winsome measure
With tunes, that in their airy dance
Scatter its pearls for treasure,

" To enrich the cœorl of patriot heart
With what had been spoil only
For lore-thane, and for monkish-mart,
And for the cloister lonely ?

" Has he no pulse to throb for deeds
That are the minstrel's story ?
No voice to swell the acclaim that pleads
' Live on ! ' to ages hoary ?

" No music chord ? no hidden spring ?
These know not of his tending ;
No hope, no fear, no vibrant string ?
That preludes life unending.

"A wingless soul ! must he lie low,
Contented in debasement,
While eyes of stars are glistening so
On him from Heaven's casement,

"And showing many a glory-track
That waits the soul immortal ;
And pointing *up*, and throwing back
With 'All hail !' Heaven's portal ? "

"But not for me ! oh, not for me !"
Cried Cædmon, in derision,
"I am a cowherd of the lea,
Mock me with no such vision."

Through many a rift he saw the moon,
The abbey wall she whitened,
He turned his face from her, and soon
Slept with a heart unlightened.

With Heaven's harmonies his ear
Was filled up to its measure,
They crystallized into a tear
Of pain, but not of pleasure.

For even in his dreams the stars
Imaged a harp that haunted ;
They mocked him from their shadowy bars,
And o'er his misery vaunted.

And Pleiades, Orion sweet,
Were all transformed to sever
Their influence kind, and 'neath their feet
To trample him for ever.

Then deeper, deeper grew his sleep,
When, lo ! a stranger came,
And fixing on him eyes as deep,
Accosted him by name.

“A boon ! I ask of thee,” he cried,
“A boon ! Rise, Cædmon, sing.”
“A boon ! Nay, why shouldst thou deride ?
I could not for the king.

“I could not if my life must make
Reprisal for denial ;
Nay, urge me not ; for mercy's sake
Spare to my heart this trial.

“Have I not left in foolish rage
The banquet-hall and table,
Where tongueless bird in darkened cage
For song had been as able ?”

“True ; but I here command thee, raise
Thy voice, for thou *canst* sing ;
Thy soul keeps silent notes for praise,
Folded, a *mounting* wing.”

“And is it so?” Cædmon returned,
“My soul has notes for sighing,
Where secret fires have glowed and burned,
Unquenched by nights of crying.

“And if I sing, what were the theme
You'd have my inspiration?
I could not praise the least I deem
Of all in God's Creation.

“I could not praise for lack of words,
Much less of tuneful numbers,
The breath of flowers, the song of birds,
Or infants' rosy slumbers.

“I am a man unlearned and poor,
How should I then be able
To interpret to my fellow-boor
Your stores of myth and fable?

“Until the Past the Present seems ;
The ‘blue lift’ shining over
The heroes of our blood-dyed streams,
Frigga's green robes must cover.”

“Ay, but I still demand thy song,
And I will choose the theme ;
So be it deep, and clear, and strong,
On-rushing as a stream.

“Spread that shy folded wing of thine,
Its strength shall be thy guard ;
Doest thou well to droop and pine ?
Arouse thee, noble bard !

“And mounting to the morning red,
Claim the world's listening ear,
For Heaven-taught melodies o'erhead ;
Claim it without a fear.

“The Origin of Things shall be
Thy burden and refrain,
Then couldst thou sing eternally,
Thy song would not be vain.”

Of joy and pain the wildest thrill !
His soul had spread her pinions,
And borne him with no conscious will
Straight up to Heaven's dominions.

While an aerial sea of sound
Heaved like the heart's devotion ;
Upward he gazed, and down, and round,
Borne on a purer ocean

Than that that washes Whitby's coast ;
With forces strong, magnetic,
It drew him towards the Heavenly host
In rapture sympathetic.

Ravished ! he knew not to endure
The holy exaltation ;
The scene so vast, so bright, so pure !
The *sweep* of God's creation !

The depth below ! the height above !
The myriad voices hymning
The Power, the Providence, the Love !
The Life-Fount's glad o'erbrimming !

Adoring he, he must have died,
Died with his theme unspoken,
Had yet the song-gift been denied,
The spell that bound unbroken.

The music-flood turned back had slain,
In anger at repression,
A being, who 'mid clods had lain,
Unconscious of possession.

But, no ! The Powers that dwell on high
Heard echoes of their singing,
And "God ! God ! God !" was Cædmon's cry,
"God," through the blue air ringing.

And "God ! God ! God ! the first Great Cause
Of all the love and beauty !
The Ultimate of Nature's laws,
Of human life and duty !"

And so he sang, his lyre strook
To words and thoughts of fire,
He sang of bird, and bee, and brook,
Nor ever seemed to tire.

Until he woke to find the sun
Was high, and long his sleeping,
The spell was broke, the vision gone,
But memory had in keeping,

The cowherd's carol, full and clear ;
A tongue-tied soul no longer,
He sang it in a scholar's ear,
And still the strain grew stronger.

And so they called him from the lea,
And said, " Be this thy mission,
To clothe the truths we teach to thee,
After thy poet-vision.

" We'll give thee of our holiest,
That thou again mayst feately
Our benediction make more blessed,
Our honey pass more sweetly.

" Our dews distil more soft, more kind,
On natures, wrath resisting ;
Our thunders louder to the mind
That needs the Law's insisting."

With reverent heart Cædmon obeyed ;
True to his high vocation,
He sang, in serge and cowl arrayed,
The glories of Creation.

But when he thought the love to reach,
That made the Cross its token,
A reverent silence followed speech,
By tears the words were broken.

*DELIBERATION OF THE WISE MEN
OF NORTHUMBRIA IN THE REIGN
OF EADWINE.*

WITH brooding brow and thoughtful mien they stood
Around their king ; silent as Solitude,
Longing for light, yet fearing to admit
Too strong a sun, lest it should quench the torch
Their fathers gave them flaming, and bring down
The gods from their carved shrines to grovel low
With humbled front before the mystic Ark ;
And ever and anon Paulinus felt
Their keen but furtive glances search his face
As if to find the Testimony there.
In truth, their rude strength quailed before the might
Of newly proven thews of mind that strove,
Aided by weapons that they wist not of.
His deep-sunk eye turned inward upon scenes
Which they divined were visions of a seer ;
His stooping form and pale Thought-shadowed face,
Uplifted from a mass of raven hair,
Like the moon peering from the shades of night,
Inspired a reverence they were shy to speak,
And doubted, cherishing. An angel, he,

Holding within his hand a little book,
Wherein they could not read. Yet they had heard
From his fine lips the echoes of a Voice
That spake from the blue waves of Galilee,
And 'neath the cool green plumes of Olivet,
And near the grey keep of the sepulchre,
Witnessing to a life beyond the grave.
And as the night sweeps her dark robe, star-gemmed,
Through the wide halls and circuit of the Heavens,
So did the dark, dark Past, and Future, that
Seemed even darker and more filled with dread,
Grow glorious and beautiful with joys
Their yearning hearts had not ev'n dimly guessed,
In grove of oak or temple of the gods.
And herein was the lure. It was this hope,
To know the soul's weal in the great Beyond
That drew them to Paulinus' feet, and gave
Them willing ear for the new faith he bore
Triumphant to them as an open scroll,
A flag unfurled,' or trumpet, brazen-lipped.
“Speak, little book ! strange scroll ! speak of the
Light
Which can disperse the darkness of men's lives,
And if it flees, then we will welcome thee !
Wave, crimson flag, that tells a victory won
Over the thrall of sin and chain of lusts
That bind man's nobler nature 'neath the base—
Wave in the four pure winds of Heav'n, and if
They do not rend and tear thee in their strength,

Then we will hail thee and will be content
To take thee for our banner ! And blow long
And loud, thou brazen trumpet, and the fall
Of Tyranny from its high throne, the quake
Of sinful consciences shall be a sign
Whereto we will, for evermore, submit."

On this wise had they spoken, but the sign
From Heav'n had not yet fallen. Now their thoughts
Grew eloquent in silence, till outspoke
An Ealdorman, of snowy hair and beard,
The burden of them all, and on this wise :

"O King, how fugitive the life of Man
Upon this Earth, if nothing may be known
But what a Vaid may picture ! 'Tis as when,
In winter time, a sparrow to the warmth
Of the hearth-fire lighted in your halls
Flies from the icy rain-storm. By one door
The poor bird enters, but it scarcely lights
Upon such plaisance ere it spreads its wing
To pass out by another, whence it came ;
Into the storm and darkness whence it came,
The blinding rain, the pitiless driving wind,
The pinion-binding, wing-enfolding cold.
Such is the life of Man ! So tarries it
A moment in our sight, but passed away,
Who knows its Hither journey, or its Whence ?
Who seeks to know looks out into the night

To find it dark and chill and filled with all
The discords of the raging elements."

"This Gospel is the Harbinger of *Day*!
A beautiful new day!" Paulinus cried :
" 'The Night shall pass, the shadows flee away,'
But an immortal day, eternal noon
Shall be the pure soul's Future. God rolls back
Its curtain to all eyes that yearn to know."

That day they welcomed, and its light soon broke
On king and court and even on idol priests,
Who trampled on the false and chose the true,
Making allegiance to the God of Heaven.

And shall not these arise in the white light
Of the great Judgment Throne, there to condemn
Us, who have bats' wings to avoid the sun,
But love to wanton in the dusk of Doubt?

THE LAST DAYS OF ST. COLUMBA.

AMID his little flock, the monks of Hy,
Columba felt the weakening of the hands
That leaned upon the crook, the weight that slowed
The wearying wheels of life. Wherefore, as one
Who meditates a journey for long time
Into lands far away, he gave much care
To storing grain against the next year's need;
In all arranging for the common good,
That he, at his withdrawal, might be missed
Only for the kind face that nevermore
Should rise upon them, like the accustomed sun—
Only for his loved voice and holy words,
With what pertainèd to his priestly worth.
Then, when the soft airs of the May played warm
About his frosted brows, and the sea broke
With swell of music on the shores of Hy,
To pass in lapsing murmurs, he uprose,
And bade them take him straightway to the west,
That so their brethren, lab'ring in the fields
Where Nature best was wooed, might have the joy,
For future memories, of receiving each
The blessing from his lips was in his heart.

In sorrowing silence, and in awe that held
Soundless, upon their breath, the words that rose
In fond appeal against the prophecies
He on occasion uttered—Nature's cry
To its beloved, “Far be it still from thee”—
They to a car two goodly oxen yoked,
And set their faces to the fertile west.
Reaching the field, the busy husbandmen,
Whose toil was service to the Lord, quick dropped
The emblems of that worship, and pressed round
The agëd abbot in a glad surprise.

The westering sun flung his last rays upon
The scene to gladden it, while the sweet eve
Drew on to weep in dews of sympathy.
“My children,” said the abbot, “I had wished
Four moons ago to leave you, that I might
Be with my Risen Lord on Easter Day.
It was a selfish thought, for so my loss
Had with its shadow dimmed your Easter sun.
But now the days remaining are so few
I dared not tarry, lest should be foregone
The joyful pain of bidding you farewell,
And blessing you with the dear words of grace
That fell like ointment from the Master’s lips
Upon our elder brothers. Peace! His Peace
Be on you all, and unto you, and on
Him who shall come up hither in my place;
And upon all whom God’s good Spirit calls
From self-hewn cisterns to the living springs.



"Ah, grieve me not with weeping ! for mine eyes
Have not a tear to answer back to yours.
I joy, as labourers joy who see the hour
Draw on for rest, and for the feast bestowed
In thankfulness for what is gathered in.
'Mid Donegal's wild mountains my heart rose
As lightly as a bird upon the wing
To youth's own jubilate, hummed beneath
The merry pulses of the quickening blood.
But now my peace has broadened to a sea ;
I know it for the Love that floweth in
The tiniest creek that lies along its shores.
Inalienable joy is mine, as given
By long inheritance. I see the time
Move down the vista of years unfulfilled,
As might an angel down the vaulted skies,
When Caledonia shall be won to Truth,
And the uplifted Cross shall be her sign.
Oh ! blessed be the eyes that not as seers
Behold it ; but drink down its rosy dawn
Into their baby-blue, and ere the noon
Get well accustomed to its holy light."

With that he turned him from the crimson sun,
His face towards the foam-wreathed wash of blue ;
And a few days wore on, the Master's feet
Growing more near to his refining sense.
But none around him heard, or marked what time
They reached the threshold of the door and paused.

Columba knew, and yet, intent to fill
The sacred leisure while his Lord delayed
To give the summons to the Banquet Hall,
Went to the granary, and showed the monk
On whom he leaned, what goodly store was there
Of the Life's bread he should no longer crave.
And then, to charm the shadow that swift fell
Upon the monk's swart face, he said, "This day
Does doubly mean *Sabbatim*, rest, to me ;
For I shall leave the burden of the years
And all the toils of my long pilgrimage,
To enter on the eternal peace and calm.
Seest thou not the Master at the door ?
He waits for me, while waits the Sabbath on
The wearied sons of Earth. When it shall pass,
He will depart and take His servant hence."

So from the store of garnered grain he bent
His careful steps towards the monastery.
And on the way an old white horse, that still
Fulfilled his round of daily toil and took
The dairy's produce to the wattled huts,
Put in his own familiar, mute appeal
For notice and endearment. The meek head
Was laid upon the master's neck, to coax
The motion of his gentle hand between
The wistful eyes and down the scanty mane.
The monk had driven the creature off, aware
That ev'n the grasshopper must be a weight—

And scarcely was it strange, for better men
Had from a better Master's knees kept back
The little children that their Master loved—
And yet Columba chid him. The good man
Is tender even to that thirst for love
The dumb things know, who share our pain and
curse,

Yet are excluded from our higher joys.
He fondled him, and made his beast-heart glad.
Then mounting up a little hill hard by,
He listed up his hands to Heaven, and blessed
Hy, west and eastern, through its length and breadth,
And his beloved monastery, with prayer
It might a beacon be for moonless seas
He prayed for Caledonia—prayed for it
As for a region still in shade, that Hy
Was set to lighten with its torch high held.
Then, like its own apostle, he spoke words
Of grace and benediction, that befit
A venerable father in the Lord ;
A priest, who from the altar-stair perceives
His congregation melt from him, and knows
He shall not meet them there again, but pass
Beyond a veil that never will uplift
To show the Holy Place to mortal eyes.
The shades of evening fell as he returned
To his low wattled hut, but not to rest.
Oh no ! Sabbatim was for him elsewhere.
Still it was day with him, and till it closed

How could he else than occupy, as he
On other days was wont, among his flock ?
It was the hour for their evening meal
Upon the Word of Life, the portion was
A sweet, familiar psalm. He break it them,
And read—

“I will alway give thanks unto the Lord,
His praise shall in my mouth for ever be,
My soul shall make her boast in Him, that so
The humble hearing of it may be glad.
Oh, praise the Lord with me, and let us all
His Holy name together magnify.”

“Ut benedicam Domino,” replied
Each brother for himself, in reverent fear,
Lest wandering thoughts should, light of wing and
swift,
Sweep down upon the altar of the heart,
To steal away the sacrifice of praise.
And still the saint read on, with many a pause
Between for exhortation.

“No want is
To them that fear Him. The young lions lack
And suffer hunger ; but who seek the Lord
Shall never want for any goodly thing.”

“And herewith ends the page,” saith he ; “and I
Will not turn over, but will leave to him
Who cometh after me, a text that more

Befits an opened ministry than one
Closed o'er for the Recording Angel's seal.

“ Come, children, hearken unto me, and I
Will teach you—taking up the parable
And doctrine of the father whom you mourn—
‘The judgment of the Lord.’

“ So will he speak,
And may his speech distil like holy dew.

“ Now let us hence to Vespers.” For the day
By this had worn to evensong, and still
The Master tarried at the open door,
Nor gave the welcome summons, “ Come away.”
Oh ! did there mingle with the Vesper song
For him the throb of angel harps, or strains
Borne from th’ acclaim of choirings Cherubim ?
Perchance he had not heard ; the inner man
Was so attentive for his dear Lord’s voice,
Should accents ere so soft fall from his lips—
. To cleave their swift way through the balmy air—
“ Belovëd, come away. The guests are set,
The table ready, and the wine outpoured,
And now I call upon thee to make haste ;
Belovëd, tarry not. The guests are set.”

But no, not yet (he said, the midnight hour) :
There is a little moment left to wait
Upon him in his cell, and hear the words,

The sweet, last words he sends his followers—
The message that the angels brought to earth
Of peace and of goodwill, with the desire
That each will be resolved to keep the bond
Of love in perfectness, and so advance
A kingdom foreign to this world of strife.
Those sweet, last words, how breathes the Sabbath
calm

Tenderly through them ! He has taught the fear
Of God to his dear children, but he ends
By speaking of the love that casts it out ;
Or makes it tender as a filial awe
That dares to look upon the frown, to see
The apparent anger lift on secret love.
A little time in loneliness and prayer,
And night's most solemn hour was on the turn,
And sleeping monks, waking to hear the bell
Ring out for Matins, turned and closed their eyes,
Till it should be upon the final stroke,
And they could hurry in to find the lamps
Were not long lighted nor the prayers begun.

Before them all was the declining saint,
Prone in the darkness, with the dews of Death
Clustering around his brow, the hand of Death
Icy upon his heart. He groped his way
Towards the altar he had long time served,
And there knelt down, as he would offer up
His passing soul upon it ; make it as

A step towards the altar of the Cross
Whereon was all his hope. So Diamid,
His servant and his well-belovéd son
Found him amidst the gloom, seeing the gleam
Beneath the tonsure of a few white locks.
No longer could the agëd head support
Its own weight, looking upwards. As the monks
Drew near in chaunting, flinging shadows dark
Upon the line of light their torches made,
They saw who knelt before them, and they read
The sign upon the face Diamid gave
His shoulder to uphold ; and, sore amazed,
Suspense prolonged the hush they yearned to break—
A silence 'twas that throbbed, a calm that gave
And palpitated with a quivering sense
Of the Invisible brought all so near,
It might be manifested by a breath
Man's latest enemy was there to meet
His vanquishment before unwilling eyes.
And seeing that, there blended in one cry
The voices that had ceased their monotone
Of sleepy morning praise. The cry brought back
The spirit from the opened gates of Heaven.
It came back smiling, like a mother's face
That chides because it must. It raised the hand,
Fallen so heavily a-down the side,
In its old act of blessing. The lips moved,
Nor could they more. None heard the Master's feet
Retreating from the threshold ; but there passed

With Him Columba, to begin afar
The real life whereof this was the sign ;
To join a nobler priesthood, and to laud,
Among just spirits perfected, the King,
The praise of whom ne'er ceases, but in pause
Which is most like the albatrosses' sleep—
A sleep known only on the outspread wing.

*THE LADY AND THE SWEETBRIAR.**

I.

“GIVE it me,” said a fair lady, with a face of such beseeching,
That its earnestness brought wonder in the eyes that turned to hers ;
And the answer came but coldly, “ Little was it worth my reaching,
If for your acceptance, madam, as the cones upon the firs.”

2.

O'er the broad, white walks the carriage rolled as over velvet lightly,
And the pulsing air breathed fragrance to the honey-seeking bees,
And the sun with golden pencil wrought amid the shadows brightly,
On the lawns and white walks tracing the rare foliage of the trees.

* Sweetbriar (eglantine). In the language of flowers, the emblem of poetic fame.

3.

And beside the walks there blossomed beds from
which uprose the incense
Of rich perfumes, so commingled with the sounds we
love to hear,
We might think bud, leaf, and flower stirred with
under songs the silence,
And like Memnons in the sunlight murmured praises
low and clear.

4.

And the antelope was startled sudden from its shady
cover,
Where the timid fawn stood gazing with its soft and
dewy eye ;
And beneath its wings the music of a water-harp,
skimmed over
The white swan, as one immortal, scarcely privileged
to die.

5.

And within the open carriage with the speaker there
sate others,
Young, or in the prime of manhood, sympathetic to
the touch
Of the joyous nature round them. He, who overleaned
his brothers
For the briar, less expansive, seemed afraid to praise
too much.

6.

She who asked it, young and gracious, showed herself
by far too fervent
For the trifle she was asking, and the blue blood in
her veins.
Why, beholding her, who would not pledge him her
devoted servant—
Count as leisure time spent for her, and as pleasure
all the pains?

7.

Ne'er in court of Eastern monarch might a fairer
Esther, gliding,
Find the royalty of beauty make her of her wish
secure ;
Smile, and touch of sceptre golden, and the kingdom's
sworn dividing,
And the banquet laid where Bulbul breaks for Gul the
silence pure.

8.

Was it, then, to chide her fervour he withheld the
spray of sweetness ?
Or that he indeed esteemed it for her wish a thing too
mean ?
Blending in his own idea the symbol with the fact's
completeness,
Honeysuckle for the rustic, crown-imperial for the
queen.

9.

Howsoe'er, again as careless of the slight show of displeasure,
Or but heeding it as, sheltered, she might heed a passing shower,
She said firmly, "I'm sincere, sir, if I tell you I would treasure
This dear spray of briar more high than primal Eden's choicest flower."

10.

He laughed lightly. "Nay, then, lady, speak you an your will were royal ;
But the waves disdained a monarch, cast their white scorn on his feet ;
And I, neither proud nor angry, nor to you at heart disloyal,
Am intractile as the billows, moving on with sullen beat."

11.

With a spoilt child's wilful gesture, as unused to such denial,
All incredulous that any could aggrieve her save in jest,
She looked round in a half-pouting, coy pretence of inward trial,
Saying, "Will ye longer prove me, putting patience to the test?"

12.

And the company in the carriage left the silence to
the thrushes ;
They forebore by look to answer the sweet wonder in
her eyes ;
No one offered, overleaning, to despoil the fragrant
bushes
Of the trifle which her fancy wrought into an envied
prize.

13.

Seeing that the fair face crimsoned, as from contest
growing warmer,
And she felt the blush betray her, contradiction make
her strong ;
For he tied the briar before her, saying, “ Now, to
please thee, charmer,
Spoils from all beside I’ll gather, and the quest be not
too long.

14.

“ Who aspires asks the laurel, and the cuckoo-pint
breathes ardour,
And the amaranth is worthy of a thought in hours
like these ;
For our term here, though a pleasance, finds us yearn-
ing for the warder,
Who but frees us for God’s heaven by the harsh turn
of the keys.

15.

“Ah, you say, ‘The world is lovely !’ ‘Tis the lovelessness discerning,
Ardent souls press on and upward for the fulness of
the feast ;
Aspiration spurns its prison, and the strong flame
upward burning,
Mocked is by the morning sunbeams planting ladders
in the east.

16.

“So the amaranth I’ll twine ye, whispering hope of
love immortal,
Asclepēias though you grieve not, and the ash adorns
the grand ;
May you, crowned with radiant lilies, pass so pure the
heavenly portal ;
Here, Earth’s roses round you blowing, make your
home a summer land.”

17.

He continued, emblems grouping in a wreath of
floral beauty ;
But his words bore all the sweetness, every accent fell
so cold,
With a ring of admonition, and as tribute were a
duty
Rendered to her sex, exacting as the Cæsars of their
gold.

18.

Or he spoke as priest in blessing, used to blessing,
speaks benignly
O'er the babe the fond young mother shows him in its
noontide dreams,
And she thinks, the foolish mother, that the babe
smiled so divinely,
On that day the sun was partial, making haloes of its
beams.

19.

Thus, with kindness most indifferent to her for herself,
she bore him,
As her womanhood alone had changed his silence
into speech ;
She had finest intuitions, in their breath she sate
before him,
And a queen ne'er bent more queenly to a censor sent
to teach.

20.

And a queen offended never looked around her with
more wonder
Or more pain, lest courtly flatterers might have heard
her anger dared ;
And the fine lips, finely curving, seemed in their dis-
dain to ponder,
What emotion might be spoken, what perchance
were better spared.

21.

In his breast he placed the briar, from the carriage
next was springing,
Meaning by a moment's plunder to rob Flora of her
best ;
But the lady sought to hinder, said, to him in protest
clinging,
“Leave the lilies for the Naiads, wild flowers for the
lark's low nest.

22.

“For I tell you, rose nor laurel, lily nor the high
acacia,
Will I take to compensate me for the trifle you
refuse.
Oh, indeed, it *is* no trifle ! O'er me leans the dead
Aspasia,
And her shade knows well the sweetness of the per-
fume I would choose.”

23.

“And therewith the thorns accepted,” he replied,
more hardly breathing ;
But she heard not ; all her pride had vanished into
childlike grace,
And a few tears started downward, where the dimples
were enwreathing
Smiles, as sunbeams glide through shadows of the
boughs that interlace.



24.

Yet so humble was her pleading that the company
were movéd,
Moved from fear that youth was working some short
trouble on her brain ;
For her sake they would have spoken, "Leila, oh, our
best beloved !
We will gather what you ask for, only be yourself
again."

25.

On their lips the words were frozen. Interference
might be treason,
For a high look quelled them sudden as the rider
reins the steed,
And conveyed reproach for passion, little called for as
the season
Called for snow to spread its covers, or the sower to
scatter seed.

26.

Oh, she knew it ! felt it ! Smarting were the tears
that came, unbidden !
Yet, for all her shame, determined that she would not
be gainsaid :
He had learned her heart's desire, and the secret
sweetly hidden,
Had not that proud name Aspasia trembled from the
lips that prayed.

27.

Looking down on the fringed eyelids, treacherous to
the tears in hiding,
And the lip that curled in trembling, like a rose-leaf in
the heat ;
He might well reflect how little such a whim was
worth the chiding—
She may have it, an she listeth, just to bruise be-
neath her feet.

28.

But upon this wise he spoke not. “Lady, since this
boon you covet,
Deigning with so much insistance to require it of my
hand,
I impose my own conditions : you must nurture it and
love it
Over every flower that glories spring and summer,
through the land.

29.

“As I give it, you must plant it, wear it as your
highest fortune
On the breast that might, impetuous, have desired the
diamond’s flash,
Gems upon the bodice sprinkling ; yet, if this you
still importune,
I will grant it, and Heaven help you, if you learn
the vow was rash.”

30.

At the word the soul leaped forward from the spheres
her eyelids clouded,
And the smile stood fixed in wonder 'neath the
dimples on her cheek;
And she cried, "What time my maidens have for
death this bosom shrouded,
Then ye may 'neath the rosemary for the perfumed
token seek."

31.

"Take it, then," he said; "it will not, warmed by
your heart's pulses, wither:
So you ne'er in scorn uproot it, careless of the vow I
bind,
It will make each gale Arabian, and the wearer, sum-
moned hither,
Shall its wondrous fragrance loosen on the sweet souls
left behind."

32.

All the company sate thinking, "Strange it was that
silver fountain
Should be loosened, in all seeming, but to tinkle over
stones.
Oh, the eglantine! what folly! Poet brains above
the mountain
Might turn dizzy, who would blame them? Never
Virgil, 'mid the cones,

33.

Happy with his bees; while Homer, blinded to Earth's
show and presence,
Strained to where Olympus' forehead met the kisses of
the gods;
Never e'en the proud Lucretius, 'wilder'd with the
unblessed incense,
Or those fair diviners, speaking vaguely from the fierce
tripods.

34.

But what waste of words in giving that which in a
day must perish;"
Yet they marked the cold indifference of the tones
that voiced the words.
He bestowed the briar, she placed it softly on her
breast to cherish,
And you might have thought she only vouchsafed
audience to the birds.

35.

For she never asked his meaning, or even thanked
him for the giving,
Taking it as 'twas hers rightly, therefore best ac-
cepted so.
As she bowed to breathe its fragrance, her heart beat
new praise for living;
Yes, the world was very lovely, and the joy out-
weighed the woe.

36.

“Ah, stigmatæ!” silver laughers from the mobile
mouth brimmed over.
“Well, and in our life-walks guarded, sweets lie
bruised amid the thorns;
Us, exempted from all trouble, sings the rustic bard
and lover,
But *his* notion of exemption sure the sad Earth-angel
scorns.”

37.

Merrily the open carriage rolled above the white walks
fleetly,
And each voice was hushed from speaking, the fair
lady sate at ease;
And the bell that chimed for Vespers chimed upon
the soft air sweetly,
And who listened might hear angels lure to Vespers
through the trees.

38.

Merrily the open carriage rolled above the greensward
lightly,
And the daring breeze that kissed her was as fresh as
breeze of morn;
But who watched her rich bloom hiding, lips com-
pressing, judged, and rightly,
That the eglantine so cherished had betrayed the
cruel thorn.

39.

Oh, the pride that steeled for anguish ! oh, the love
the test disdaining !
Read ye never aught excelling in a tender, human
book ;
Not one word of woman-protest, or one sign of
inward plaining ;
From that moment she had risen, and could meet the
donor's look.

40.

Now where'er the lady passeth, there are those in
haste to follow ;
Now where'er the lady lingereth, stops the busy social
wheel ;
And her smile in glancing downward, cheers sad
hearts, convicting hollow,
And her influence is potent for a king or clown to
feel.

41.

But her magic lies in drawing to her natures most
congenial,
And each common thing she touches gleams with
beauty evermore ;
And each soul that feels the contact rises from the
gross and menial,
And the blindest see the sunshine, and in seeing it
adore.

42.

Now where'er the lady passes, on the air a sweet
breath trembles ;
But it seems to float around her natural as the song
from lute :
If her vow she has repented, then i' faith she well
dissembles,
Or her grief has naught of passion, and her minors all
lie mute.

43.

For she says, "The world is lovely;" Does she ever
say, "'Tis loving?"
She adores the God above her: Does she ever praise
her kind ?
No one questions : She is happy, through her courts
and lindens moving,
And the sun screened in his fierceness and restrained
the bitter wind.

44.

Oh ! the lady with the briar, very humble was her
token,
Very sweet and very gracious was she in her high
estate ;
From her affluence of pleasure she could lavish on the
broken
Words that hallowed in the healing, like the chrism
consecrate

45.

No one when she drooped imagined aught but God, to
please his angels,
Had removed her in her summer to partake their
higher joy,
Giving her for Earth's best music strains in their
sublime evangels,
Friends immortal for Earth's frail ones and a bliss
without alloy.

46.

Only when her maidens robed her for the grave, so
still and solemn,
Did they find her crimson secret, written like a martyr's
sign ;
Then there rose a sound of weeping, as they thought
on the proud column
Placed above her kinsman sleeping, scarce was carved
a deeper line.

47.

Oh ! her maidens, when they robed her, knew the
torture and abasement ;
But the eglantine it flourished on the breast so still
and dead,
And its fragrance floated outward through closed doors
and shuttered casement,
And it liveth on and shameth the wild violets o'er her
head.



48.

So it is that pilgrims, passing, visit that dear grave to
feel it,
And they think it strange such sweetness should be
married to the thorn,
And they ponder o'er the secret; else the lines anear
reveal it—

“Genius must be grief exalted,
All men are to sorrow born.”

49.

So, sleep soft, belovéd Leila; all the magic now
evanished:
Did you ere your choice repenting covet diamonds
in its stead?
Did you say, “The world is lovely”—yes; but Love
itself is banished—
And upon your silken cushions long to lie in colder
bed?

50.

Ah! who knows? The fires stolen from the bright
celestial altars
Flash upon the blind Prometheus, vulture-punished
for the theft;
And the aspirant sees and pities; but assays the same,
nor falters
Till himself in turn is writhing from the pain the beak
has left.

51.

And 'tis true that youths and maidens, the sad fate of
Leila hearing,
And with that the wondrous magic that the eglantine
bestowed,
Sought the magic with wild passion, hoping much and
little fearing,
While they missed its price in blossoms that the lower
walks bestrowed.

52.

But 'twas not in every bosom that the briar bloomed
undying,
And 'twas not in every bosom that it struck the fibrous
root.
Oh, the wearers that affected proud disdain or bitter
crying ;
But, the perfume missing, flung it down to trample
under foot !

* * * * *

53.

Sate within his antique chamber, he, the briar's careless
donor,
And he mused, with hands supporting head that long
had bent o'er books.
Little did he reck that moment of the vow he pressed
upon her,
But at intervals recalling the strange fervour of her
looks.

54.

Lo ! one entered of grave presence, and saluted him
with distance,
Saying, "Sir, is dead the lady—Leila, the old castle's
pride?
Think you of that ride in summer, when she asked
with such persistence
For the eglantine your humour long, we thought,
in jest denied."

55.

"I remember," he said slowly ; "yes, her ardour
was amusing."
"So," replied the herald, sternly, "what remains
your mirth may move.
Was it nobly done, bethink you, that, her woman-trust
abusing,
You should plant a thorn to rankle where the gods
had placed a dove ?

56.

"For her maidens tell the story, how the cruel thorns
had torn her ;
And they weep above the hidden anguish of her
martyr's life,
Thanking God that it is over, and the lilies now
adorn her,
And the cymbals clash out louder than the din of
Earth's long strife."

ANNIE.

I.

I WANDER lone and weeping,
Weeping beneath the stars,
For Annie, who is sleeping
Behind the vault's cold bars.
Lone, till by feet o'er taken
That fall with angel tread,
As if they feared to waken
The slumbers of my dead:
And the little Annie
Comes to me, my Annie.

She says, " Shall ne'er another
Thy heart to gladness wake ?
Tell me I'm like my mother,
And love me for her sake."
This little child before me,
As suits her own sweet will,
Leads where the sunset's glory
Floods valley, lake, and hill—
Lead me, little Annie,
In the good way, Annie.

Her precious life, the giving
Has cost me all too dear ;
They brought to me the living,
Nor knew that death was near.
And I was old and weary,
Old when my child was born,
But thy girl-mother, deary,
Brought me the dews of morn.
In my bosom, Annie,
Hide as she did, Annie.

Like the young moon's first glory
Upon the brow of night,
Upon my heart I bore thee,
And silvered it with light.
For, as the crescent gloweth
To full-orbed comeliness,
My little daughter growth
Mature in loveliness.
Be a woman, Annie,
Like thy mother, Annie.

The mother's smiles, bright day-beams
From a sun set ere noon,
The child wears even in her dreams,
Therefore she is my moon.
I bade thee be a woman,
Yet, ah, that it should be !

For I am weakly human,
And it were death to me,
That from my arms, Annie,
One should take thee, Annie.

II.

They tell me Annie's fading ;
That her pulses come and go—
Is uncertain as the shading
Of the west at sunset's glow !
That the soul, whose lamp is burning
In her windows, crystal clear,
For release is inly yearning,
And a song we do not hear :
And the angels, Annie,
Come too near thee, Annie.

I had borne my own decreasing,
For the years go slowly by,
Had the rounding and increasing
Of her sweet sphere filled my eye.
But, alas ! my crescent's waning,
And her fair young silver bow
Hath not many days remaining—
To the full orb will not grow.
Waning, little Annie ?
On my poor heart, Annie ?

'Tis true—the organ pealeth,
And I listen with bowed head,
Though my heart from worship stealeth
For communion with my dead.
In my agēd hand my dying
Steals her own in benison,
And there swells o'er my low crying
Kyrie Eleison.
Could I hold thee, Annie,
Wouldst thou leave me, Annie?

Then go to the departed,
For my threescore years and ten
Soon must end ; the broken-hearted
Live not o'er their lease with men.
Go, thou happy child, and meet her
When she folds thee in her arms
Say I very soon will greet her,
Freed by Death from Love's alarms.
Say I loved her, Annie,
Through the long years, Annie.

III.

It was in early morning
One plucked the lilies white,
Meet for a bride's adorning,
Bright with the dews of night ;

And violets incense-breathing,
Emblems of Annie's youth,
She mingled in love's wreathing,
For purity and truth ;
For the dying Annie
Asked for them, poor Annie !

She hastened to her chamber,
But Annie heard her not ;
She feared to break her slumber ;
Yet sure he hath forgot,
The old man by the pillow,
His vigils through the night ;
For, trailing like a willow,
Within her tresses bright
His hair gleams white as snow-wreaths
Amid fine mists of gold.
He sleeps with her ; though softly breathes,
One hears not. Are they cold ?
Hush ! they are with Annie !
Mother ! wife ! saint ! Annie !

THE MAIDEN'S FEAR.

“WHERE do you think I intend to go,
Circumstance seeming to order it so,
To make a nest for my own white dove ? ”
A youth once said to his lady-love.
He said, and his haughty Spanish brow
Unknit at the questioning look of eyes,
Mingling past pain with a happy now,
Though he saw nought but a pleased surprise.
And he said, “Shall I take my lady where
She once was fairest among the fair,
And let her queen it again, and greet
Friends who would give her a welcome sweet? ”

But the maiden bowed her beauteous head,
And her whole frame shook, as firm she said,
“No, no ; let us in some other place
Begin the journey of life together,
To cling through wild, as through sunny weather.
But oh ! not there, if you love me well :
With you in a desert I'd rather dwell,
And toil to make it bloom like a rose,
. Than seek in that sad, sad spot repose.”

“ And why so, Gertrude ? ” he said, and keen
His kindling dark eye looked down on her.
He loved her well, yet it might be seen,
If he sweetly smiled, he could frown on her.

“ Oh ! question me not, but leave alone
A nerve that vibrates to every tone,
A wound which will ever open wide,
A sea-like grief, with no far neaptide.”

“ Of aught that is painful in the past,
Knowledge and sympathy is my right.
What is the dark shadow o'er you cast ?
You must tell me, dearest, this very night.”

Then the swan-like neck bent lower down,
Weighted it seemed with the heavy crown
Of golden tresses, that in the sun
Shone like the train of a glorified one ;
But in the twilight her saddened face
Might have become a contrite nun,
Seeming to plead with a childlike grace
For forgiveness for some deep wrong done.
Yet more sinned against than sinning was she,
Speaking so soft of an enemy,
Who had won and betrayed her artless trust,
And trampled her honour into the dust.
Who had blackened her whiteness, and made her look
A fool in the eyes of the wise and good,

Till strangers scorned her and friends forsook,
And her shame but a pitying few withstood.

“What could her motive be ? Tell me, love.”

“That I was young, and they said more fair,
And they praised my beauty hers above,
Though she twined rich jewels in her hair.
Ah, let her be ! I was in despair,
When the good could with averted eye,
With righteous look and carriage high,
And no apology, pass me by.”

“Why did you not ask them to explain,
Meet your foe with indignant front,
And fearlessly set yourself right again,
Pure as a babe given back from the font ?”

“I tried, but my voice did swoon on the air ;
I had not the heart to do or to dare ;
I could not contend like the good and the brave,
So I only asked for an early grave.”

The young man paced the dark'ning room,
His face portending a deeper gloom ;
For he thought that Innocence should be bold
To prove the defaming one a liar,
That heat never robbed the unmixed gold,
And the robe of asbestos shrank not in fire.

She felt it, and drew a deeper breath,
While her face as ashen grew as death.
But she said with a frank simplicity,
“ Let all things true to their nature be :
Should you some day see a hunted deer
Suddenly turn and refuse to flee,
Turn on the hounds with no sign of fear,
Love, I'll not speak if you censure me.”

“ How could I,” he thought, “ blame a thing so sweet
Though I let her kneel unraised at my feet ?”—
“ But, Gertrude, albeit so far estranged,
Your foe may repentant be and changed.”

“ Perchance if she knew I had all forgiven.
My forgiveness, love, I have yearned to tell,
For I felt that my soul could ne'er be shriven,
Nor I with repentant sinners dwell,
If I ever wronged her in my thought :
Who owe to my Lord five hundred, nought
Could justify me in enmity
To her who owed fifty pence to me.
But the other night, ere I fell asleep,
I wondered if she could hate me still,
And my angel, while in slumber deep,
Showed me how wrought her cruel will :
For I dreamed that in that little town,
Fancying fair was my renown,
I wandered long and to church I went,

And as thitherward my steps I bent
I saw, 'mid the faces young and old,
Many who were my friends of yore ;
But oh ! they looked down on me so cold,
As I stayed to speak at the open door.
To hide the quick tears from these I turned,
To the little ones my heart next yearned,
Children I knew and had fondled too,
They at least would think me good and true.
But instinctively they shrank away,
Nor lifted their faces for my kiss,
So I turned to one near, and said, 'I pray,
Say, though it kill, what meaneth this ?'
A woman was she, so kind, so just,
She could not a worm tread in the dust ;
And knowing her truth, I took her hand,
Bearing her off with a strange command.
Then she said, ' Let me in the wood's deep heart
Hide you from all but myself apart,
That I may unwind these bitter woes,
And the secret of all your grief disclose.'
With that I drew her in the wood,
That none else might see my misery :
She sate, while near an oak I stood,
My nerveless hands clasped helplessly—
' Oh, maiden fair ! ' but I saw her start,
For, lo ! in the grass a snake was coiled,
And at me it made an angry dart,
And the fierce attack I scarcely foiled.

I heard no more, for with fright I woke :
It needs no art of the gipsy folk
To spell out to me what that dream bespoke."

She said no more, the while her face
Said, "The Judgment-seat is not my place."

And the young man went to the very street
Whence his fair one fled with trembling feet.

So the maiden dreamed of an altered lot,
And a love once prized contemned ;
But the weapon against her prospered not,
And the false tongue was condemned.

THE DUAL NATURE.

Two natures, or two separate impulses,
Conjoinèd in one soul confusion make,
A mystery of character unpierced
E'en by a skilled Lavater's practised eye.
Thus, were my goddess Flora, I would choose
To bloom unseen in leafy solitude ;
A flower, too pale for the intruder's eye
To rest upon and covet, and too low
Ever to raise its drooping head above
The tall grass of its well-enclosed retreat.
I would not even share the violet's shade,
Because, while shrinking in its purple robe,
It seems so like retiring royalty :
And then its incense—as a lute, soft played,
Betrays the minstrel hiding in the bower—
Discovers its recess. No : I would bloom
Unknown, unenvied ; young, and joying in
The very sense of *Being* in a world
So fair and beautiful ; and I'd unfold
My petals to each balmy wind that bore
To me the fragrance of more glorious flowers,
And joy in all their richness. I'd not drink

The cool dewdrop that falls from Morning's robe,
Like a pearl shaken from a bridal train,
Until it did refract the solar rays ;
Then would I quaff it, happier than she
Who quaffed her earring to Marc Antony.
All sounds that played around me should enchant—
The trill of birds, the ripple of the stream
Should to my voiceless music chorus make :
The swaying boughs above, around, should awe,
Still more the stars with their "delightful eyes."
An Undine souled ; but not eternally,
I'd die in time from overflowing bliss,
Worn out with Nature's poetry, and charmed
To slow forgetfulness of it ; for flowers
Not long live past the opening of the bud.

No one should weep for me,
Nor long watch keep for me,
Nor 'twixt white leaves enfold,
Dead beauty to behold.

Only the wind in sighs,
"Love her as here she lies,
As tender and as true,
Though lowlier than you,"
Might tell to other flowers,
There flourished near their bowers
A bloom, less sweet and gay,
But not the less dear than they ;

Only the stream should say,
"I miss her on my way ;"
Only the honey-bee,
"She keeps no sweets for me ;"
Only the butterfly,
"I'm not too gay to sigh
When friendly flowers die."

But nothing human should
On my green peace intrude ;
Nor e'er above the mould
Should my strewn leaves be told,
My genera to trace,
Or fix my floral place :
Oh no ! unseen, alone,
I'd bloom and fade unknown.

But if I were a bird, I would not be
A little chirping linnet, nor a thrush,
Nor any bird of meaner lute or wing,
Nor anything you fondle in a cage.
I would not to the snowy window-sill
Come for the crumbs the little ones might leave.
I would not be the lark, to soar at morn,
But nest all night contented on the ground ;
Like to a sensuous poet, oft inspired
With lofty themes, and soaring to their height,
Then back returning to his low-born joys.
Rather than ring the lark's loud carol, I
Would scream the sea-gull's scream in shrieking winds,

While borne in their free pinions o'er the waves
That answer in such awful symphony,
As strains have been conceived and shouted forth,
Born from a mad musician's maniac brain.
But never mind the song ; the spread of wings
Would be my great ambition. Oh, to nest
Above the lofty pines, and be caught up
Into the very bosom of the storm !
Upon the craggy rock, 'mid thunders loud,
To sleep unhurt as sings the nightingale,
And in the freshness of the morn awake
To sense of freedom ! In the great expanse
To feel like a strong spirit unconfined,
And so to rise and greet the morning sun :
Not shrinking from him with the servile lids
Of men who cannot meet his kingly gaze ;
But, as I were an equal, dare to fix
My undazzled eye upon his scorching face.

Oh yes, I'd be soaring,
With winds and waves roaring ;
I'd mock at the thunder-cloud,
Answer its volley loud ;
Rejoice in Infinity,
In sense of sublimity,
In greeting the sweet sunrise,
With my unshrinking eyes ;
Or in the swooning air,
Hovering o'er meadows fair,

See how each living thing
Fears the fierce feathered King.

Things mean, keep far from me !
The sun and its star for me !
Winds, in your mighty sweep,
Time with my swift course keep ;
In the sublimity,
Death, meet and vanquish me :
Short be the agony—
Long is the sleep.

THE EARLIEST FLOWER.

A DARK dull patch of earth was all
 The ground I called my own ;
No dank weeds marred it growing tall,
 Or tares by hatred sown ;
But o'er it strayed no perfumed breeze,
Or wild song from the sheltering trees.

And from my eyes fell many a tear
 That mourned my barren lot,
No plant to tend, no vine to rear,
 And train around my cot.
Light, liberty, and life were mine,
But beauty sought a statelier shrine.

Ah me ! one early morn I crept
 Out where the sunbeams fell ;
I wondered that I ever slept,
 When morn broke o'er the dell,
Flinging red roses o'er the sky,
And dropping them on such as I.

When, lo, a tiny shoot appeared
Above the spangled soil,
And day by day it grew and reared
A crowned head, with a coil
Of living green, the sun unbound,
To spread its pomp above my ground.

It was more gorgeous than the king
Whom Sheba went to see,
It drew its beauteous colouring
From beams that played round me,
And censed the garments of the air
With perfumes as Arabia's rare.

I clapped my hands, I wept for joy,
I blessed my darling flower ;
It heralded the lily coy,
The rose that glads my bower,
Yet in my heart 'twas held most dear,
Because it cheered a desert drear.

O maiden fair ! in saddened home,
Where age is grave and weak ;
Sigh not on sunlit track to roam,
Because the soil is bleak ;
Let thy bright life to all round thee
Be what that flower was to me.

Upon his family bough no longer now;
But tossed—— Here let me cease, my heart is full ;
And were there sympathy in such as thou,
Silence were eloquent and language dull.

But thou art cruel, autumn leaf ! a spell
In Memory's hand to raise my buried dead :
Again I hear, in thought, the funeral knell
Of morning hopes entombed ere evening's shade.

And I too like the year am very young;
But old with effort, failing of its end :
Yellow and sere and melancholy hung,
Would God that I might die, or He vouchsafe a friend.

THE BLACK HELLEBORE.

LET poets hail June's royal rose
As queen of Flora's bowers,
And say how bright her beauty glows
'Mid Summer's brilliant flowers,
When Spring with her pale children fades
Beneath the snowy hawthorn shades.

"Gul in her bloom" may sweet unfold
Her petals, wet with dew ;
The primrose rear her crown of gold,
With flowers of varied hue ;
The lolling lily see the wave
Double her beauty, proud and grave.

And wealthy Autumn may endow
With floral charms her gifts ;
The inverted cone hang from the bough,
The pear droop through the rifts
Of veiling leaves, in lines of grace
Art borrows for a sculptured face.

The beauty line lives on in stone,
The pomp of red and gold
Must pass, and leave the bough alone
That bore it, to enfold
The long forsaken nest, while bare
Of all that made it rich and fair.

This time has come ; we look abroad
On sullen, wintry skies ;
We look within, the festal board
Makes glad ; we lift our eyes
To where the sacred mistletoe
Finds points for Cupid's little bow.

Its coral lips the holly opes,
To smile upon our mirth ;
The fir inspires the children's hopes
For fruits ne'er borne by earth ;
Till fast despoiled, within the fire,
Its branches crackle high and higher.

We have our wreath, we have our tree,
Though winter is so stern ;
The ivy and the holly see
For vine and graceful fern ;
And if of flowers no great store,
The beautiful black hellebore.

Yes, this our Christmas rose shall be
More loved because of dearth ;
More welcome now, than jewelled she
The summer lap of earth :
The laurustinus is in bloom,
The jasmine's amber scatters gloom.

Black hellebore, I love thee well ;
Because it seems to me
Thou'rt like the friends who near us dwell
In our adversity ;
A train of gay companions past,
The fond, true heart clings to the last.

NATURE'S REBUKE.

Tired of hoping where is no fruition sure,
I lay me down to die, where ran the brooklet pure ;
But the breeze over me swept with his balmy wing,
'Till the life faint in me warmed as the flowers in
spring.

I could not die.

“So,” said I, “weary heart, why dost thou beat again ?
Go, cruel west wind thou, nor brace again for pain
Nerves which have swooned from strain ; go thou and
freshly blow
Over the young and gay, over my lady's brow ;
Leave me to die.”

But swelled the west wind more, shook out his wings
in play,
Brought me the rose's breath ; fled but to steal away
The silver chime of bells, which, as they rose and
fell,
Said, as they fell and rose, “Anguish, it worketh well ;
Thou shalt not die.

"Thou shalt not die," they said; "anguish, it worketh well."

While I in wrath replied, "How so? ring out and tell,
Nor mock me in my pain." But changed they low and
sweet.

But changed they sweet and low—"Youth's pain is
passion's heat :

Thou shalt not die."

"Thou shalt not die," they said; "youth's pain is
passion's heat."

Angry, I still replied, hurt by their silver feet,

"Take your rebukes elsewhere :" when rang they louder still.

"Anguish doth purify ; good stronger grows from ill ;
Thou shalt not die."

"Thou shalt not die," they said; "good stronger
grows from ill;

Anguish doth purify :" while laughed the singing rill,
" I cease from storm to bear treasures upon my breast,
Which I had never known meandering in my rest.

Why wouldst thou die?"

And lo ! the bearded wheat said, " We must prove the
flail

Would we be wholesome grain. Youth, take thy woe
and ail

Out of the darkness stars teach me, content with
gloom ;
All things instruct my soul, which from her narrow
room
Sings no *Nunc Dimittis* until her work be done ;
When so it is, and fades behind Life's hills Life's sun,
Glad may I die.

“PARTING.”

I GRIEVE not to leave you, I shed not one tear ;
Is’t that I am callous, or you are not dear ?
I never have loved you, I’m fain to confess ;
I never have hated, so here let me bless.

I pipèd, ye danced not ; I mourned, no lament
Responsive, according with my wail was blent ;
Ye frowned not upon me, but, oh, ye smiled cold,
As on Goethe’s Mignon the statues of old !

The marbles are lifeless, and cannot but so ;
And I, I forgive you and bless ere I go,
Because, though not lifeless, ye differ from me,
As our sylvan birds differ from those o’er the sea.

Those are wild ; these are sweet ; but which are the
best ?
Who can say, when at first all good were confest ?
And if they agree not whom Nature divides,
Let her bear the stroke of the cynic who chides.

The doves from the cotes and the rooks from the
trees

Keep apart on the lawn, yet who quarrels with these?
Say you are the pigeon, and I am the rook ;
Or you are the rook, with the strut and high look ;

Then I'll be the pigeon, less proud and less free,
Who blames that we differ ? what matter to me ?
We can't all be loved here, or love whom we ought ;
Nor can we be found by whome'er we are sought.

You are good in your way, may I be in mine,
Till we meet in the land where love is divine ;
Where souls not akin ne'er estrange them, but blend
In the friendship of ONE, o'er all others the Friend.

Till then we are human, and so must forgive
The taint of the earthly, and live and let live.
God bless you and keep you, and bring you and me
Where prejudice comes not, and spirits are free.

THE BELLS OF MALINES.

Ring, ring, ye merry bells !
Ring, ring ; your music swells
Upon the swooning noontide air
As if a sea of sound were there ;
While down the half-deserted street
Is heard the fall of silver feet.

Ring, ring, and keep awake
Heavy eyes prone to ache.
The holy sisters to their cells
Retire, and each her beads low tells ;
While, in a hollow monotone,
The monks are counting with a groan ;
And the young seminaires grow faint
Beneath the newly-learned restraint.

Ring, ring, ye laughing powers,
Break on the rigorous “ Hours ; ”
Compel each devotee in trance
To join you in your airy dance ;

To the revel lead the Brother,
To the Carnival the Mother ;
Bewitch the boyish seminaires,
And give them pleasures for their prayers.

Ring, ring, ye merry bells !
Each in confession tells
Of his lapses in devotion ;
But not one has e'er a notion
That the priest's default is equal,
And a penance mild the sequel ;
In his sleeve he breathes it after,
And he starts to hear your laughter.

Ring, ring, that from o'erhead
Joy may come where mirth has fled.—
—I entered Malines in the noon,
'Twas like a lady in a swoon.
Ah, sleeping beauty ! who can tell
Thy glory as a reigning belle ?
Thy day is passed, and yet thy face
Bears witness to its youthful grace.

Ring, ring out carillons !
Over Flemings and Walloons !
Let the haughty Spaniard hear ye,
And an English muse endear ye.

Cease not for the illustrious dead,
Time put, like children tired, to bed;
The Margarets have long while slept,
By brilliant memories o'erwept.

Ring, ring out merry chimes !
Ring, ring in happier times !
The gorgeous pageantry was o'er,
When Margaret held her court no more ;
Artist and sculptor missed her smile,
And soon there rose the martyr's pile
Where erst had been the burgher's fête,
And all Malines was desolate.

Ring, ring, ye merry chimes !
Wake the Oreäds in the limes,
That might be Niobes for grief ;
They hardly seem to stir a leaf
Or nest a song-bird, while below
The river crawls, but does not flow.
The sun sinks 'neath the horizon's bar,
And evening comes still as a star.

Ring, ring, ye merry bells !
Loudly your music swells
Through all the watches of the night.
Full oft one wakens in affright,
For verily one seems to hear
A voice that follows, strong and clear,

And sings with you through all your changes,
And pours throughout your octaved ranges
A volume of such mighty sound
As fills the air, above, around.
Is it a giant in the steeple,
Who lulls to trance a sleeping people?
Is it a spirit in the air?
A buoyant spirit, strong and fair?
Ah, who can tell? Ye midnight bells,
Ring on, the voice still sinks and swells.

*ON HEARING JENNY LIND'S "GOOD
NIGHT" SUNG IN THE STREET.*

SWEET, songful sister, my full heart
Is borne upon thy strain,
In all its sadness bearing part,
And answering to its pain ;
Yet while the sunset sky is bright
We will be strong, and say, "Good night."

Good night ! good night ! to those who weep
Such tears as we have wept ;
Sweet peace to those who dread the sleep,
That all before have slept ;
Bright dreams to maidens new to care,
And brave youths wrestling with despair.

Good night ! good night ! to rich and poor,
To prisoner and to free ;
To children playing at the door,
And laughing merrily :
Good night to mothers fond and proud,
And fathers smiling 'neath the cloud.

Child of Cecilia, why has Fate
 Been so unkind to thee?
Thou wert not born to this estate,
 Or nursed in misery?
“Good night!” it echoes down the street;
Thy mien is proud, thy song is sweet.

What hast thou done to vex the world?
 Why frowns it so on thee?
O heavens! who shall say? Our life
 Is full of mystery;
Yet angels, leaning from the height,
May hear thee wish the world “Good night!”

Nor let the scattered pence it flings
 Be painful to thy touch;
The bard who for its guerdon sings
 Is equal, and has much
To break his heart-strings, ere his lyre
Fail 'neath unsatisfied desire.

Good night! good night! The eyelids ache
 With tears too long unshed;
We weep ourselves to sleep, and wake
 With heavy heart and head:
But when we say our last “Good night!”
God grant the waking may be bright.

*THE SEA AT SUNSET BEFORE A
STORM.*

PLACID as an Italian lake,
When the declining sun did take
 His farewell kiss ;
And lingered o'er its waters blue,
With crimson lips, disparted through
 The deep abyss.

And round and up the thunder-clouds,
And clouds white, soft as infants' shrouds,
 Felt that long kiss ;
And on the sea, and o'er the sky,
And on my soul, I know not why,
 There fell a bliss.

Storm clouds were gathering o'er my soul,
Fiendlike, distressful in their roll
 Of angry play ;
While white clouds, like home memories stood,
Timidly beckoning me to good,
 To dawning day.

And as the ideal loveliness
Of sun and sea, in fond caress,
Soothed earth and sky,
My soul from out her grief and shame
Untroubled as those waters came,
She scarce knew why.

But this she knew—that Christ was near,
Who, chiding the rebellious tear,
Said, “ Peace be still ; ”
So she was hushed, and prayed that He
Would moor her on the crystal sea,
When pleased His will.

ESTELLE AND THE SEA.

FROM AN UNPUBLISHED STORY IN VERSE.

WITH two fingers upon my wrist,
Talking about the sea,
Oh, what a tale I could tell
Of the friendship it had for me !
For me in my misery,
What a friendship it had for me !

But they know not of what they speak,
Speaking about the sea ;
For to know they must read the past ;
It rests between God and me—
A wee, bitter book hard-clasped,
For, oh, it tells what the sea
Said to me in my misery !

And I know as well as they,
That cool blows the breeze from the sea,
But it has not always blown
For cooling and strengthening of me ;
For the sea and the moon were unkind,
In the days of my misery.

O moon ! thou wert calm and pure,
Shining upon the sea !
Had I in my pureness been calm,
In the days of my misery.
For, oh, thou did'st light up the scorn
Of a calm, pure face turned from me !

And the ocean, pitying said,
“ Come, hide thee, poor child, with me ;
I will quench in a Lethean sleep
All the days of thy misery.
Thou art hot, but my curtains are cool ;
And still as the stars shall thy coral couch be,
Deep down in the sounding sea,
Deep down in the sounding sea.”

It was not that thy waters were cold
That I turned from thy wooing, O sea !
It was not that thy sleep was too sound,
Or thy caverns too narrow for me,
That I plunged not into thy arms,
In the days of my misery.

Not so cold as the world wert thou,
Moaning and treacherous sea ;
Nor so fathomless as God's love
And pity for such as me :
Or else—— For thou temptedst me sore,
In the days of my misery.

SONG.

WHERE shall I fly with thee, sweet love ?

 Oh, where shall I fly with thee ?

Where shall I bear my stolen dove,

 That her nest secure may be ;

That her sleep may be soft, that her love may be true,

That her wings she may shake in the rosiest dew,

While her joy-notes are many, her moanings are few ?

Shall it be Cyprus or Rhodes, love ?

 A spot in the Cyclades ?

They are bright, but a silence broods, love,

 Where garlands droop from the trees,

Which are not for the brows of the living to wear ;

They but tell of the dead—of a Sappho's despair,

Of the harps that once rung nor died on the air.

Wert thou an eagle to tame, love,

 I'd hood thee till to a peak

Of Skiddaw or Snowdon we came, love,

 In the morning's earliest streak ;

There we'd sail and career, there we'd swirl and we'd sweep,
Though the winds might beat fierce, and our crag
might be steep,
And my bidding alone should thy rapid course keep.

But thou art no bird of song, love,
No poet-wine wets thy beak ;
Nor art thou an eagle strong, love,
To covet the mountain's peak :
Thou art only a bird that has one little note,
And that one note is love, 'tis " I dote, and I dote,"
And it wearieh ne'er from the tremulous throat.

So I know where I'll fly with thee, sweet love,
I know where I'll fly with thee ;
I know where to bear my stolen dove,
That her nest secure may be ;
That her sleep may be soft, that her love may be true,
That her wings she may shake in the rosiest dew,
While her love notes are many, her moanings are few.

BOURBON TO THE PRINCESS RENÉE.

SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN SUNG UNDER HER WINDOWS
BY MARÔT.

An eye there is that drinks the light
Of changeful skies of grey,
And loves the twilight's dreamy shade
More than the shining day.

An ear there is that wearies soon
Of music's pomp and mirth ;
Yet listens to the whispering breeze
With thoughts not born of earth.

A heart there is that never bowed
To beauty in its flower,
Nor stately form nor rosy lip
E'er charmed it for an hour.

Yet that proud heart the beam could quell
That lit one thoughtful eye ;
One lip had language in each line
To draw or heal a sigh.

And harsh and stern was he of soul
That bowed not where men bow ;
Yet earth in him may reach to heaven,
Breathing one holy vow.

He is of earth, she is of heaven,
To whom alone he kneels ;
Her soul, in shining through her face,
The angelhood reveals.

O royal maiden ! list my song,
And if it tell thee true,
'Twill say the beauty goodness limns—
Such beauty—dwells in you.

And all the worship mortals feel
For holy, pure, and sweet,
Is his, who bade your minstrel lay
That homage at your feet.

MARÔT TO RENÉE IN FERRARA.

THOU royal child of sunny France,
List to an exile's story,
And weep not for his errant fate,
But for her passing glory.

The lyre that whispered Bourbon's love,
And chanted Marguerite's beauty,
That like a clarion rang to rouse
The sons of France to duty ;

What time Bavaria and Castile,
With Spaniard and Brabantois,
Leagued with the Hainault wolves to crush
The noble House of Valois ;

That called the pride of Languedoc
To crowd d'Alençon's standard,
While Breton, Norman, all pressed round
To swell his warrior vanguard :—

The harp that sung its country's praise,
And won her monarch's praises,
Now in an ear that loved it well
A mournful strain upraises.

Our olives and our vines still grow
In green and purple splendour,
And still the dark-eyed peasants train
Their branches long and tender.

And in the castles of the great
Is many a glad carousal ;
While young and happy hearts yet join
In innocent espousal.

But, oh, the secret tears and shame,
The broken ones who languish
For those who dare proclaim the Truth
And brave *the Question's* anguish !

For those, mayhap, the morrow's dawn
Will to the dread stake herald ;
Father or husband ? brother ? son ?—
Body for soul imperill'd.

A stain lies on our land of France,
Nor Seine, nor Meuse can cover ;
Nor roll the waters of the Rhine
The blood of martyrs over.

Weep for the homeless, houseless ones,
From vale to vale who wander,
And while I tell their sad estate
Their tale of misery ponder.

In our fair land Oppression reigns,
The Church her throne of power ;
But Christ looks down from heaven and calls
That darkness, "Satan's hour."

Daughter of France ! 'twas hate impelled
Marôt to seek the favour,
Which late has been the exile's balm,
To heaven a goodly savour.

And while within your borders dwell
The good—may God deliver
His children from the gates of hell
For ever and for ever.

À L'IMPÉRATRICE.

AFTER HER MAJESTY'S FLIGHT FROM PARIS.*

O BEAUTIFUL Eugénie ! the late beloved of France !
How leave you for our quiet fields the music and the
dance ;
The gay scenes where your splendour beamed down on
nobles proud,
Where gallant youths and ladies bright alike their
homage vowed ?

Why come you o'er our waters an exile and alone ?
You who were born 'neath sunny skies, and raised to
share a throne ?
Our white cliffs yearning towards you might give you
welcome pure,
But ne'er did sea-gull's nest the bird of paradise
allure.

Fair Bertha in the old times, drawn by her heart's true
love,
Came with the new faith to our shores—an olive-bearing
dove ;

* Her Majesty was pleased graciously to acknowledge these lines, and to express herself as “très touchée des sentiments lui exprimés.”

She came from courtly pageants to a wild Saxon horde,
A bow of peace 'mid tempest clouds—a gospel to her
lord.

Far other scenes await you; our country queens it
now:

There's culture in her bowers and fields, there's light
upon her brow;

She treasures aye a magnet which draws from east and
west,

Student and poet, priest and sage, to dream upon her
breast.

There's strength upon her waters, there's freedom in
her homes;

Not more unfettered the gazelle on Judea's hills that
roams

Than are her peasant children, exulting in the right
To keep inviolate the hearth, and consecrate its light.

But you are not drawn hither, O lady of the south!
By the broad keen eye of Science, or by Cupid's rosy
mouth;

Nor does the white star guide you, of Gospel hope and
love:

You come, a fugitive unhailed, a troubled sky above.

O beautiful Eugénie! so lovely in your woe!
Our English hearts shall make you room, our tears
with yours shall flow;

Our queen from her safe splendour shall mourn your
sad reverse,
For truly beats her woman's heart, through better and
through worse.

You cannot love our country as that you leave be-
hind :
Ah ! and each note of sharp regret another's brings to
mind—
Vibrating Marie Stuart's, whose sore lament had
strain,
All too prophetic of her woes and future life of pain.

We see arise the daughter of Austria's proud queen,
And fain would we have hidden *her* from mob and
guillotine.
She moved on to the bitter end, as noble spirits should,
And all a guilty nation's crime spoke upwards with
her blood.

Yes, and we think of others ; but we forbear, and
leave
The dead past of your throne of France to bury them
and grieve.
Find in our green fields quiet, rest from the song and
dance
Of your estranged yet pleasant land, your *fatal* land of
France !

THE DEATH OF CRATESICLÆA.

Cratesiclœa, mother of Cleomenes, the Spartan hero, was sent with her grandchildren as hostages into Egypt. In the course of events, they were all sentenced to be executed. Her request that she might not see the death of the little ones was not granted her, and she perished immediately after them, saying, “Oh, whither, children, are you gone?”

OH, whither, children, whither are you gone ?
Tell me, for I must follow. Shall I share
Your beauteous youth ? Will a young soul leap forth
From this decaying frame, this threadbare cloak,
And journey with you to the Elysian fields ?
I soon must overtake you, for the bolt
Jove puts for me in impious, heathen hands,
Waits only while I gird me for my fall.
Oh ! children, whither are you gone ? I fear
Lest you should rove beyond my spirit eyes,
And leave me doubtful of the course I take.
I pray you to delay your airy flight
Until dividing death joins us again.
What does the future bring ? Shall we awake
To those sweet joys on which the good discourse,
As worthy of the god that reigned within
Every heroic soul that wore this clay ?

Or shall our eyes, refined of filmy mists
And crystal humours, see such foreign sights
As ne'er had charmed them, or been borne by them
While the soul's curtains were let down between.
And will the ear hear sounds it never caught,
Even in dreams of rapture? The warm heart
Beat with felicities it ne'er conceived
Or could have even here esteemed as joy,
Had priest or sybil laid the mystery bare?
We go to greet our kinsmen gone before.
Farewell, my own loved country! I was glad
My age was not too worthless for a pledge
Of peace to you and honour. And farewell,
My godlike son, whose children I had nursed
For fame and Sparta, but resistless Fate
Has hurried them before me to the shades.
'Tis meet I follow them. The lovely boy
A few brief years had made a Hercules,
May be entrusted with some thunder-bolts
To hurl for Sparta when the hour has come.
Now farewell, Egypt. You are welcome to
The life-blood you outpour, and the cold clay
I leave behind me as my little all.
'Tis well to hide some Spartan clay 'neath crusts
Of your Egyptian earth, for who can say
But that, some atoms meeting where the source
Of vital heat does quicken into life,
A soul—the want of Egypt—may be born
To dwell within the flesh, and lord it o'er

The soulless masses who have cause for fear,
With nought to gain by death and all to lose !
Why linger, executioner ? The hand
That struck the children down need not be slow
To give me my dismissal. Pray you haste.
Oh, whither, children, whither are you gone ?

ALL THINGS AWAIT THEIR TIME.

ALL things await their time. The little worm
That knew the doom of serpents, and wound round
With self-made cerements—a corpse-like thing—
Slept on amid the life, devoid of form,
Blind to the leaves and flowers, and deaf to sound,
Now fluttereth by upon its psyche wing,

All things await their time. The trees and flowers
Change not the season for their bright display :
Each in its order, in itself the seed,
Waits till the summer, from her tropic bowers—
Or winter, whence the polar winds have sway—
Bids it from its long fetters to be freed.

All things await their time. The silent stars
Grow not impatient as they set or rise ;
But in sweet order through their marches sweep,
Nor linger 'neath the far horizon's bars,
Though lands beyond lie fairer. Let the wise
Learn of this army their fixed course to keep.

All things await their time. The Esquimau
Long 'neath the pale Aurora guides his sleigh,
With whip and halloo, o'er the white bear's track :
His family, enhoused 'neath wintry snows,
Through all the drear night wait the god of day,
Whom they at last, with worship, welcome back.

All things await their time. The springing lark
Ne'er interrupts, with his clear notes, the bird
Who warbles her hid music when the woods,
Save where the moonbeams penetrate, lie dark ;
And, save her song, no echoed laugh or word
Breaks the charmed silence that above her broods.

All things await their time. Oh ! restless heart,
Consumed with inward fevers, hear my song,
And let its artless burden be a balm
To heal your dire impatience and its smart :
Be sure your time will come ; although so long,
Labour and wait, expect it, but be calm.

GUARDIAN ANGELS.

SWEET 'tis to my thinking,
That a guardian power
Hovers near to aid me
In temptation's hour;
Hovers near to chide, to soothe
The spring, the sadness of my youth.

Call it superstition!
I the faith will cherish
When a whisper warns me
Some bright hope must perish,
Or when my heart's silent strings
Throb, 'neath touch of unseen wings.

If God freed my spirit,
I know where I'd hover,
Whose heart's aching pulses
My soft wings should cover—
Who should, 'mid the press of cares,
Entertain me unawares.

NEGLECT.

NEGLECT ! Oh, is there e'er a word loosed from the
silver bow
Of Earth's so long-confounded tongues more eloquent
of woe ?
To reach the sympathizing ear with more of human
pain ?
Then if you know it, speed it me ; my search as yet is
vain.

Neglect ! The eastern wind that soughs above our
early blooms,
That scatters far their petals white and wastes their
sweet perfumes,
Disturbs the vigils of the night with never sadder
moan
Than that which trembles from the lips of Earth's
neglected one.

Neglect ! Oh, sing me not, nor speak that anguished
word again !
But say did ever music-chord break 'neath a heavier
strain ?

To lie from music mute beneath the hand that might
have woke
A minstrelsy of love had Fate a lighter burden spoke.

Its living letters shade the brow of helpless orphanage ;
Full oft it twines its thorns amid the whitening locks
of age ;

It gives the suppliant for bread a stone, then passes
by,

Indifferent to the burning tear that trembles in the
eye.

You need not, to avoid it, shun the moorland wastes
of life,

For in the fireside laughter joins the young neglected
wife ;

Yet from her laughter low is missed the ring of happi-
ness,

As from her lip's repose the sign of deeper seated
peace.

Amid the merry children grouped upon the daisied
lawn—

Theirs yet the freshness of the spring, the lightness of
the fawn—

I'll point to one, one little hour, to pleasure so be-
guiled,

But far apart, at home, he sits a poor neglected child.

Neglect ! The child of Genius feels upon his heart its
chill,
Long ere the hand of Death compels heart-beatings
to be still ;
It lists the sound of harp and lute, then strikes the
javelin hard,
To pierce the minstrel through and hush the sweet
voice of the bard.

The poet's fate to mourn to Heaven the gloom that
may remain,
To him whose light hath carried hope to many a room
of pain ;
He sees the gilded chariot whirl a flattered Divēs by,
Heedless to mark in pause of song the sadness of his
sigh.

Oh, lips touched with a sacred fire have raised to
Heaven appeal,
Against the anguish of neglect to find its grief their
seal !
A toi à chanter Béranger in spite of worldly scorn,
Sing on, poor plaintive bird, sing on, thy breast
against the thorn.

Why not ? The lowly ones, the good, have had its
curse to bear ;
The world has meted scorn to these its angels un-
aware ;

And many a foot has trod its wastes that well had
graced its bowers,
Has patient wearied o'er its thorns, which fain had
kissed its flowers.

Yet hush ! the Holiest of all ! Ah, let us pause and
think !
Of His forsakenness and grief what soul can touch
the brink ?
Our priestly Mediator stands before the Eternal
Throne
And pleadeth aye on our behalf, the winepress trod
alone.

* * * * *

Our Father knoweth all things : yes, the sparrow in
its fall ;
The raven calling for its food with croaking carrion call ;
But we are dearer far than these, He numbers every
hair,
And by a Providence unseen, guards us with special
care.

Sweet are the stars of promise set o'er the world's
arid wastes,
While still to seek the unfolded lamb the loving
Shepherd hastens ;
The mother may forget her child ; but, oh, its feeble cry
Shall pierce the Eternal Father's ear, through the
unconscious sky !

The captive daughter sits and moans 'mid ruins
desolate,
No human voices answer her in pity for her fate ;
Yet for her ashes beauty calls, light breaks from
Eastern gates,
Let her but rise and seek to where the holy Bride-
groom waits.

I know not what the song may be which throbs from
harps of gold,
Above the waveless sea of glass, to melodies untold ;
There sing they Moses and the Lamb, but never will
there float
To straining, listening human ear of that sweet song
a note.

And yet methinks, from many an eye whence God has
wiped the tears,
From many a heavy-laden soul, new-lightened of its
fears,
From many a heart whose loneliness seemed all its
earthly lot,
Will speak in look and word the cry, "Saved ! saved
and unforget !"

Oh, rebel hearts of ours ! Oh, lips so prodigal of
moan !
Be still, keep silence till ye learn world-harshness
to atone,

To those whom God by you might draw to happiness
and peace,
Bowed spirits, wounded consciences, and lives devoid
of ease.

Does Ephraim fail? his goodness pass like cloud or
early dew?

Bitter reproach or silence stern are not for such
as you;

Nay, seek out Ephraim, whisper low in accents soft
and mild,

The Father loves him still, as when His very pleasant
child.

Know you a woman old and wan, wretched because
of sin?

Search her life-history for the good that may be writ
therein;

And if upon the purer leaves of childhood there be
trace

Of early prayers and wise resolves, and a short day
of grace,

Then go with God's kind memories, her conscience
sere to wake,

Tell her He calls her as a wife, youth-grieved, whom
all forsake,

That He the "kindness of her first espousals" hath
in mind,

And all-forgiving waits anew the broken vow to bind.

Thus shall this earth be less a waste ; thus may we
people Heaven ;

Thus when neglected by our loved, rejoice in sins
forgiven :

Oh, unforgetting God, do Thou, in our prosperity,
In our adversity keep us, that we forget not Thee !

AN APOLOGY TO CHRISTMAS, 1874.

IN THE CONTEMPLATION OF THE ACCIDENT ON
THE GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.

CHRISTMAS ! Father Christmas ! thou standest at the door,
Holly-wreath'd, with gifts in hand, jovial as of yore.
Is our greeting cold ? Forbear it, for our hearts are sore.

Christmas ! merry Christmas ! the "merry" slowly dies
On our lips, all quivering with a sad surprise ;
Waltz in requiem interluded ; laugh in dread assize.

Old friend, forgive our silence, let not grief aggrieve !
We have kept kind thought of thee since we last took leave ;
Watch'd we for thy welcome advent, ivy crowns to weave.

Stars gem the blue heavens, the while bright fires roar,
Where the families spread the feast, waiting for the boar ;
But a Death's-head scowls, and slow the mutes pass on before.

Fear on children's faces—pause in their noisy glee—
Wreath let fall from lissom hands—pray'rs, for
minstrelsy—

Though we own not the still faces, fix'd in agony.

For our human instincts reprove our faintest smile,
Bid our tears flow unrestrain'd for the dismal file
Of the mourners, and for those who sweetly sleep
the while.

Merrily as ever the bells come o'er the snow,
Heedless of a single string, throbbing note of woe,
Miserere! for the dying : life is ebbing slow.

Christmas ! Father Christmas ! thy coming was their
joy ;
Started on the homeward track sire and romping boy,
Matron winsome, clerk and sailor, maiden, young
and coy.

Snorts the horse of iron upon his grimy track ;
Does a knell sound in their ear who shall ne'er come
back ?
On the landscape see they shadow ? turns the rose-
tint black ?

No ; the sound-waves cleaving, make silver laughter's
room,
The tar who tells of shipwreck fears not other doom ;
But a pause comes in the story—on the bright face
gloom.

Pause fill'd by a moment ! yet, ah, what thoughts
o'ersweep

The mind's unquiet surface ! sound the heart's great
deep !

As the threaten'd carriage sways before the fatal leap.

Jolt of wheel on sleepers ! shrill shriek and dreadful
jar !

Bruised remains and mangled limbs ! cleft and shat-
ter'd car !

Struggling forms in liquid shroud ! red rain ! and
help afar !

Oh, the dire confusion ! how helplessly and still
Breathing forms beneath the mass lie in snow-drift
chill !

Moans and groans on ev'ry side, and corpses 'neath
the hill !

Met they fate so dreadful, who never met before ?
Never pray'd to meet again, on one common floor,
Met as ships on ocean meet, to part for evermore.

Mystery ! this meeting of those whose Past has
been

Wide as heaven's crystal bars, with a world between,
And whose future ne'er might group them actors in
one scene.

So the human reasoneth ; alas for human ken !
Shared they not the fatal hour, with its how and when ?
Bound for all the Present brings, a brotherhood of
men !

Sunder'd far thro' Life, and so strangely met in Death ;
Common-Present scarce esteem'd, hanging on a
breath :
"Boast thyself not of the morrow," well the wise man
saith.

Speeding to one Future, as brief as it was dread,
Comprehended in one fate, lived who now are dead :
O'er them rose the wail of wounded ; ne'er a word
they said.

Quiet eyes unheeding the fearful scene around !
Ears, indifferent to the crash, stopp'd in mortal
swound !
Did their spirits, winging upwards, pause with wonder
bound ?

And the wounded, dying, with life to voice a cry,
Did the angel hands anear bid the dimming eye
Open for a blessed vision—Jesus passing by ?

"Save us and deliver !" O wail of anguish'd hearts !
Apollyon falls back worsted—quench'd his fiery darts ;
And *their* grief is Heaven's rapture ere the soul
departs.

Words of happy Christmas hymn agéd lips assay ;
Help is offer'd, but those lips in brave protest pray,
“Waste not succour unavailing; I must die to-day.”

Christmas ! Father Christmas ! there lieth side by side
Six and twenty silent forms, waiting for the tide
Of the surging seekers whispering, “Is it ours who
died ?”

Bid the bells toll slowly. These make not all their
sum :

Other eyes are locked in sleep, other lips are dumb ;
And the hospitals are crowded, as the wounded come.

Ne'er was sight more ghastly, and ne'er was grief more
loud.

Come where the calm faces are waiting shell and
shroud :

Here a little smiling cherub thrills the rev'rent crowd.

Here the sunburnt sailor, his face even now is bright ;
And here a beauteous maiden's locks shine like
braided light ;

There a face tells of the struggle and the weird
affright.

Calm this maiden sleepeth ; upon her velvet vest
Her sweet hands are clasp'd in prayer for the heavenly
rest—

So it seemeth : Faith assures us she is with the blest.

Bring thy bridal blossoms, fair bride that was to be ;
Father's, brother's hands are stayed from the gift of
thee ;

O'er them strew the pure white blossoms, with the
rosemary.

Pale mechanic, tradesman lie, all unconscious there,
Engineer and city-clerk, matron with dark hair,
And a maiden, waking pity, " very young and fair."

Says the stern official—" The dead I can abide,
Wash the blood from off their face ; I no tears have
dried
For that angel caught like lightning from his gran'-
ther's side ;

" But I can't abide it, the weeping and the woe
Of the kinsfolk when they find *theirs* are lying so ;
For the stoutest of them reel like drunkards 'neath the
blow."

So we show thee, Christmas, the cause of lips so pale !
Bid a *Miserere* surge over hill and dale ;
Miserere ! for the dying sob through every gale.

Christians, we call on you to offer prayer for praise,
Prayers for those whose light is quenched—" light of
other days ! "
Prayers for sleep where pain is tyrant, and the flesh
obeys.

Prayers for the entranced ones, that He who winds the key,
Through lock'd sense to human hearts, may salvation be
To the spirits summon'd hither o'er an unknown sea.

Christmas ! Father Christmas ! for gifts this year bring balms,
And the carol shall be sung, with rejoicing psalms ;
Let the children have their pleasures, and the poor their alms.

We will hush the question, from unbelief that springs, Of mysterious Providence, doubting the spread wings— Let us daily 'neath their shadow plead, assured as kings,

“ Mercy on all travellers, or over sea or land,
These, O Heavenly Father, keep in Thy hollow'd Hand ;
Give us meetness, however summon'd, at Thy bar to stand.”

Christmas ! Father Christmas ! so chasteñ'd and so bow'd,
Wait we not, with songs of mirth ; to high service vow'd,
We bend o'er the lowly Babe round whom the oxen low'd.

Floats adown the arches of eighteen hundred aisles,
“Glory in the highest!” “Peace!”—and the infant
smiles—

Blessëd Babe, is’t that the heavenly now Thy sense
beguiles?

Still it swelleth higher—“Peace! peace! Good-will to
men!”

Higher than our human wail—crying curse—again,
“Peace on earth! Good-will to men,” and Faith low
breathes, Amen.

VOICES IN THE CITY

DURING THE WEEK FOLLOWING THE WRECK OF THE
“PRINCESS ALICE.”

THE throb at the City’s heart is stilled
 In a sudden and sad suspense,
The air with a dying wail is filled,
And the river’s sullen moan has thrilled
 The crowds with fear for the silence.

“Say, was the sob of the child I seek
 Choked in thy gurgling sorrow ?
The bloom was fresh on her fair young cheek ;
Would God I could wake to hear her speak,
 And tell her my dream on the morrow !”

“I said ‘Good-bye’ to my wife this morn ;
 She gave to the babe my kisses ;
Oh ! has she left me bereaved, forlorn,
And borne past the stars our youngest born,
 Her form in thy cold abysses ?”

“‘ Go, darlings, seek health,’ to my flock I said,
My flock with the ewe-lamb and flower !
And now not one but is found with the dead ;
I cut, like the Parques, their life’s last thread,
Weaving each in the web of the hour.”

“ I could have saved the girl of my choice,
If she had clung to me longer.
Love cannot drown, yet her silvery voice
Shall nevermore make this heart rejoice ;
The waters than life were stronger.”

And the old, old river has no ear
For the questioning of the human ;
Coldly he brings from their oozy bier
The lost, the longed for, the loved, the dear,
The youth, and the agëd woman.

And the wail that greets them echoes far
Beyond the City noises ;
And evening hangs her beauteous star
O’er blackened corpse and funeral car,
And the night has mournful voices.

* * * *

Is the evil day ere so darkly clad,
We see no white threads gleaming ?
While all are awed, some are inly glad
For their own escape from a doom so sad,
Of the Unseen Hand scarce dreaming.

Says one, "I'd gone up that morn with the boat,
But for the babe's long sleeping;
Oh, Providence, you would hardly quote,
Were it still with the river vessels afloat,
Its wonted course safe keeping !

"And I ! how I missed it I cannot say;
This know I, to my sorrow—
I gave disappointment o'er reason sway,
And blamed my servants and fate all day,
To reap remorse on the morrow.

* * * * *

"And the mystery of the things that are,
Is broached afresh for the solving.
Can God's plan include a dreadful jar
In the choir the spheres lead from afar,
A perfect music evolving ?

"A dislocation be His design ?
A wound that is all unsightly ?
Let them kneel at a worn-out Faith's dear shrine,
And talk of the Providence divine,
And say the Judge shall do rightly !"

These trace not the threads of human lives,
In the tangle hard to follow,
To the Hand that blends and weaves and rives,
For the grand TO BE the now contrives,
And holds the seas in its hollow.

Amid the voices we strained to hear
What God, the Lord, might be speaking ;
In pause of thunder it sounded clear—
“ It is not in man his course to steer,
Or to find the end he is seeking.

“ In man that walketh it is not found
To know the way he is going ;
To keep his steps upon holy ground,
To ken when he nears the outmost bound,
Or tell the seed he is sowing.

“ He knoweth not, though he knows in part,
And shall in the great hereafter,
That the end was hidden in My heart—
That My purpose ruled in home and mart,
That I willed his tears and laughter.”

“ So be it, Lord, for Thou rulest well.”
And we said that it was ungrateful,
To think that by chance alone befel
Escape from the crash, the rising swell,
And the fight for life, so fateful.

One answered, “ That she could understand
How God might His own deliver ;
Or a trifle work by His command,
To crush intent with an iron hand,
And a ‘ not to-day for the river.’ ”

But as for her, she was not so good
As to dream of special keeping;
She could not believe, even if she would,
That He who gave her her baby should,
To save her, prolong its sleeping.

Alas, O God ! do we not recal
The plea for the fig-tree's sparing ?
The axe is laid to the cedars tall ;
The bush grows apace, while the olives fall ;
The careless are worth Thy caring.

But as we reasoned thus, and were still ;
There came, with an aspen shiver,
The thought—if *His* purpose wrought the ill,
And called to their doom those forms so chill,
Who cried, with none to deliver ?

We spoke our thought, oppressed with its gloom,
From its lengthening shadow shrinking ;
Yet sure that the love must still illume
The roughest path that leads to the tomb,
And glad the soul of the sinking.

Our words were met by a sweet surprise
That on God we laid men's blunders ;
Not His the rude wrench of family ties,
Nor the rush on the “ death that never dies,”
Of those, who ne'er fled His thunders.

“True,” we replied ; “of these we believe
That not one was lost who, respited,
Might the dark sins of the past retrieve,
Or at life’s latest the light receive
Which through the long years he slighted.

“We do not say that ‘twas God’s decree
The boats should come in collision ;
Yet darkly, as through a glass, we see
That no event of the tragedy
Had been, but for His permission.”

No, truly; and still love justifies
God’s ways, when they seem most dreary :
He taketh the wicked by surprise,
Removes example from guileless eyes,
And calls to His rest the weary.

And what of the children ? Fresh young souls,
Ne’er wearied but of their pleasure ?
How sadly for them the death-bell tolls !
How darkly o’er them the black stream rolls !
Has love in this cup a measure ?

“Yes,” cried another ; “an angel band,
They entered where God was sitting.
The Elder Brother took each by hand,
And said, ‘They are here by Thy command ;
That these should be Mine is fitting.

ENDURANCE.

BE silent, ye who suffer : it is best.
What is it grieves you ? Disappointment ? dearth ?
Hopes reaching high as heaven struck down to earth ?
Flowers withered that you cherished in your breast ?
Or is it pain of body ? Would ye wound
The sympathizing ear with weary plaints,
When on the torturing rack fair woman saints,
For the Truth's sake, have smiled before they swooned ?
Or is it calumny ? the Parthian barb
Shot backward ? Well, flee not like a scared dove,
Nor turn to meet it with soft words of love ;
But *stand*, like Esther, in most royal garb.
Or is it love ? There nerve ye. Let the seal
Be seven times more sure than Pilate's watch :
Let not an eloquent glance, or breath's short catch,
Or line of the too sensitive mouth reveal.
Only for others' griefs let yours be seen
In sympathy ; so every tear let stream
From the touched fountain shall a rainbow gleam,
Sunshined with thanks and blessings. For, I ween
'Tis only blessed to weep with those who weep.
This is what God approves ; and Jesus wept

With the two sisters, when their Lazarus slept
The four days in the sepulchre's dread keep.
Yet when alone, let sorrow have its vent,
And bless God—thank Him for the brokenness.
Think of the binding up, the spoken peace ;
Think of the Comforter that shall be sent.
So weep : such tears the merciful High Priest
Shall feel upon His feet ; shall intercede,
Touched with your much infirmities ; shall plead
That you be bidden higher in the feast.
And for the earthly waters, streams divine—
Infinite fulness, honey, milk, and wine.

ETCHINGS FROM LIFE.

I.

A HOSPITAL SCENE.

AMONG men stout of heart, who yet
Quailed at the surgeon's knife,
And tried that prospect to forget
In hope of lengthened life,
They brought a mother's blighted joy—
A little tender, five-year boy.

And there he lay, content and still,
While others moaned with fear ;
Not his anticipated ill,
Or slow shame-hidden tear.
He wept at times for present pain;
That passed, the smile broke forth again.

Set in their midst a little child,
He taught them how to wear
The garment of their heaviness,
Unsullied by a care ;
For each day's hope is weak of wing,
If weighed with what the next may bring.

One dark, dark hour awaited him,
Bringing a life-long cross ;
He recked not of the ailing limb,
Nor trembled for its loss ;
He hardly seemed to understand,
When laid beneath the surgeon's hand.

The severance was quickly made,
And gently as might be ;
But at the flow of blood, dismayed,
He looked up piteously,
And said, with quivering lip and eye,
“ Doctor, a kiss ! I'm going to die.

“ Do kiss me, doctor ; for I feel
That I am going to die.”
The nurse pressed on him love's last seal,
And soothed him womanly,
While trembling notes in silver key
Begged rarer kisses held in fee.

The sad task o'er, the surgeon bent
To give the boon he sought ;
But who can tell what instincts blent
With the child's secret thought ?
He urged, since he was going to die,
His claim on human sympathy.

Oh, rare fine instincts of a child !
Who shall disprove their truth ?
Not such as, heedless, have defiled
The first dews of their youth ;
Not such as through the ages' roll
Deny the Christ-child in the soul.

For who into the great Unknown
Would step out, uncaressed ?
Meet the dread Shadow King alone,
With tremors unconfessed ?
And know that here they were not missed,
Unwept, unthought of, and unkissed !

II.

HIS OWN COUNSEL.

OUR strong-armed Law, defied, at last
Had laid its index finger
Upon the naughty boy that would
Beside the fruit-stalls linger.

The Argus-eyed police one day
Had with swelled pockets caught him,
And drawn five apples thence, and proved
That he had never bought 'em.

So blindfold Justice poised her scales,
And heard the small offender
Arraigned, before the awful Bench ;
To pity none to bend her.

In a dark cell he'd passed the night—
The first night from his mother ;
But then they sent, to soothe his fright,
A more experienced brother,

Whose fellow-feeling made him kind,
And who, with soft persuasion,
Instilled a little trick or two
Of craft and snug evasion.

"This the defendant? Seven years old ;
No counsel to defend him ?
He looks more innocent than bold ;
'Tis hard to gaol to send him.

"We'll let the boy, to clear himself,
Examine his accuser.
Justice claims so much for the weak,
And who here would refuse her ?"

The magistrate then gave the small
Defendant his permission
To question the police, and so
Make good his own position.

Whereon, instructed, he looked round
From one face to another,
Then up to the police, and said,
“Please, sir, how is my mother ?”

III.

A BIRMINGHAM HERO.

THE hero's heart beats on,
Like the roll of a drum.
They are deaf with the clarion's scream that say,
The age of endurance has passed away,
And the Sybarite's age has come.

Cold winds have blown the leaves from the rose,
And the thorns remain to some ;
They bear them, and are dumb ;
For though tender the limb it stronger grows ;
And the unshed tear spheres its widening woes,
To let the still lids droop o'er and close,
As if all grief were numb.

An epic's rehearsed in the struggling street,
If we had but ears to hear.
There are victors go by on shoeless feet ;
'Mid God's own chivalrie brave and sweet
They hold their course, like racers fleet,
Without reproach or fear.

The sad psalm of life has a martial close,
For which we do not wait.
We've enough to do to learn of those
Who brightened the classic page, and rose
As gods 'mid men on inhuman throes,
To feel—we are born too late.

Blood splashed on the purple cries more, forsooth,
Than bare veins growing chill—
Than the tear on the cheek of endeavouring youth,
That at odds with the world contends for truth,
And asks hard labour, as if for ruth,
But is defeated still.

There are boys among us of mould as fine,
Were they not too near to see,
As those who were whipped at Diana's shrine ;
For they ne'er of their sufferings give a sign,
Till death has set on the clay divine
The proofs right martyrly.

Such a little child-hero was lately torn
By some fell machinery,
And mangled till he could scarce be borne
To the hospital bed, where they prayed the morn
Might bring to his eyes the glorious dawn
Of God's eternity :

For only in death could each quivering limb
Respite from its anguish know.
His bearers looked down with eyes so dim ;
He spoke, and their tears o'erflowed the brim ;
“ My father ! Don’t show me like this to him ;
Don’t let *him* see me *so.*”

The hero’s heart beats on,
Like the roll of a drum.
They are deaf with the clarion’s scream that say,
The age of endurance has passed away,
And the Sybarite’s age has come.

FABLES OF THE MILLENIUM.

I.

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB.

A LITTLE March lamb, newly shorn,
Wandered with piteous bleat,
With torn and tender feet,
To find the mother lost since morn.

It felt the wind, the sweet, fresh wind,
Blow over it so cold ;
It yearned to reach the fold,
And near its dam to comfort find.

A kind wolf met it on its track.
“ What ails you, bleating lamb ? ”
“ Alas ! I’ve lost my dam ;
The very fleece from off my back.”

“Poor little thing ! you well may bleat
And shiver in the cold,
’Tis shocking to behold
Sorrow in one so young and sweet.

“Still, I am very glad we met,
Come, dwell with me, dear lamb,
And I will be your dam,
And we will have some good times yet.”

“And will you get my fleece again ?
It is so cold without ;
I wander all about,
Thinking how cruel are those men.”

“Oh, some day soon the wool will grow !
Meanwhile I’ll keep you warm,
Nor let you come to harm ;
How could they bear to use you so ?”

And thereupon the wolf did bear
The lamb to his own cover,
And stretched him softly over,
Tending him there with kindest care.

And that sweet innocence forgot
His pain, nor knew another
Had nursed him as a mother,
But was contented with his lot.

II.

THE LEOPARD AND THE KID.

“O PRETTY leopard ! let me put my little paw
On those beauty spots of yours, and don’t hurt me
with your claw.
How I wish I too had spots, and were just as big and
strong !
I’d not hide me through the day, roaming round the
whole night long.”

“Cease, little torment ! Can’t you let my spots alone ?
I had almost gone to sleep, stretched upon this
shadowed stone,
For the days are very hot, and the nights are very
sweet.
Come and rest with me awhile, creep in here between
my feet.”

“No, pretty leopard ; I had rather be at play ;
But I’ve been a long time out, and met no one on the
way
Who’d a mind to frolic too. In this bright sunshiny
weather,
I saw a lion-cub and calf, a fatling, doze together.

“I saw a red, red flame burning in a lion’s eyes.
I asked him if it hurt him. He looked at me in sur-
prise ;

Then he went on eating straw, but his mane was all
of gold.

I'd rather have it than a beard, for it looks so grand
and bold."

III.

NAOMI'S BABIES.

GENTLE Naomi sat and ground
With Esther in the mill ;
She left her task to gaze all round,
The children were so still.
At last she saw her darlings twain
And hastened, to embrace them, fain.

One peered with earnest eyes into
A cockatrice's den.
It tried by all the arts it knew
To lure it thence ; and then
It willed to keep it in its place,
While looking in its mother's face.

And on all fours the babe had crept
Beyond its mother's mark,
To see a pretty asp that leapt
Out of its hole so dark ;
With soft low coo and dimpling cheek,
It watched it playing hide and seek.

Naomi caught her darlings up,
And kissed each in his turn :
Of joy she drank a brimming cup,
Filled from love's purest urn.
She ground with Esther in the mill,
Her thoughts were with her children still.

BIRTHDAY LINES.

I SING of birthdays one, two, three,
And sing them backwards three, two, one,
To think of how there came to me,
News of the sweet life just begun.

And then I square and cube the three
To image thee in far-off years,
Like June's first red rose glad to see,
And blossoming 'mid smiles and tears.

A happy, winsome, romping child,
Is the first picture of the muse ;
And then a woman, gracious, mild,
Rare spells to bind at will or loose.

I love thee for thyself, my sweet,
But chiefly for her sake who bore ;
And while this day with songs I greet,
Its issues widen more and more.

A little stream thy life appears,
That, seeking not, must find the sea ;
For, few or many be thy years,
Thy future is Eternity.

The first revealings of thy thought
Are whispered round as wondrous wise ;
But who thy latest shall have caught ?
The thinking spirit never dies.

May He who gave thee keep thee still
His Own, where'er thy course may be !
Our hearts wait on His perfect will,
For our desires are vanity.

What can we do but guide thy feet,
Within His vesture's shining trail ?
Assured that to the golden street
He'll lead thee when thy steps shall fail.

THE POWER OF SONG.

THE surface of my heart was troubled,
And a sense of pain,
Rising uncontrolled and bitter,
Paralyzed my brain ;
Yet 'twas but a slight vexation,
Scarcely worth a grave narration.

But so it is, and all have proved it.
When the heart is low,
Smallest trials are as discords
Moving us to woe,
And each pulse vibrating thrills us
With the misery that fills us.

Sometimes we, as harp or organ,
Need a master hand
To attune us, blend and chord us
With a skilled command.
Finest wires are found a-rusting,
Fullest chords need most adjusting.

Ah me ! I heard upon this evening
All my minors play,
Not in sweet though plaintive cadence,
Their sad roundelay :
Tuneless as the wind on ocean
Moaned they, varied in emotion.

When lo ! resolving the confusion,
Rose a melody,
Strengthening, soothing, vivifying,
As a psalm at sea ;
Full of tune and mystic measure,
Suggestive all of hope and pleasure.

Who the minstrel ? What the music ?
You will scarce divine.
Never rose such lofty cadence
From a reed like mine ;
Filling heart and brain with gladness,
Charming with reproof for sadness.

This much, it was my favourite poet,
Singing after tears,
Not with voice sonorous, grand, as
When the whole world hears ;
But as, after heavy showers,
Birds sing 'mid the dripping bowers.

And his notes to pleasure charmed me ;
I forgot my smart.
He discoursed from deeper grievance
Music from the heart ;
Yet still I felt, by sympathy,
'Twixt his and mine affinity.

This, the poet's high vocation ;
Though a shepherd lad,
Let him strike his notes with boldness,
And a Saul is glad ;
Let him sing from out his trials,
We can wait the lifted vials.

Let self be forgotten, poets ;
Art should purify,
Genius should be more unworldly
As it nears the sky.
Give us from your deepest feelings
Human nature's best revealings.

A SLEEPING POET.

IN MEMORY OF H. WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

OVER a sleeping poet stood a queen,
And, careless of the ladies of her train,
Looked down on the unconscious brow serene,
O'er which there wandered sympathy's blue vein;
And on the lips, whose quiet lines revealed
The slumbering music the closed eyes concealed.

Beautiful Margaret from the Scottish court !
She of the poet soul and childlike heart,
The simple speech, and meek yet regal port,
Felt that the child against the queen took part,
As low she stooped to set affection's sign,
Unasked, unanswered, on those lips divine.

Then lightly her French maidens smiled, and spoke
Upon the grace bestowed on Chartier,
Wondering if he would know it when he woke ?
And dared he, if he knew, his thanks convey ?
“ No, certes,” said the queen ; “ well would he list
It was the poet, not the man, I kissed.”

Around a sleeping poet we are stood,
The shadow of grey death is on his brow;
His still, pale lips were ministers of good,
But an eternal seal is on them now.
Oh, could we press them ere they pass from sight !
And the white lids that keep a rayless night !

For, ah, how sweet has rung this poet's song,
From his blue dawn till paled his golden eve !
Free from discordant passions, clear of wrong,
World pure, with no shrill notes to pierce or grieve ;
Appealing softly to man's better part,
Sweetening the bitter fountain of the heart.

Oh, tawny wine of Cyprus ! honey hives
Of Hybla and Hymettus ! there are pressed
All of your riches in such poet lives ;
Nor can their gracious mission be expressed.
For us, "Life's goblet" sparkles to the brim,
O'er his, we "chant the melancholy hymn."

"Excelsior" still aids the aspirant's strife,
And we may keep the ranks with pulses calm,
For he has drilled us in the "Psalm of Life,"
And soothed us, musing in the "Groves of Balm;"
And shown us from the "Bridge's" arch how flow
The restless waters to the sea below.

And would we wander 'mid the summer climes,
Or regions of the mountain and the flood,
He has made spoil of all their wealthy times,
Learning the legends of their great and good ;
Has heard the winds roar 'mid the Norway pines,
Trod Flemish cities, slept 'neath southern vines,

Till of their varied tongues the cadences,
With music's magic, float a-down his verse ;
As, what the "Bird of Passage" hears and sees
From many a vantage-point, he would rehearse—
From floating wreck, from haunted tower, or where
White statues gleam above the house of prayer.

Take Time, our poet ; carry him along,
And in Oblivion's mantle wrap his face ;
But know thou canst not steal from us his song :
Ours to conserve its glory and its grace.
We yield what yield we must, in faith of this :
Take man and poet, take our parting kiss.

ERIN.

"I would never grudge the sacrifice of my darling's life, if only it leads to the putting down of the frightful spirit of evil in the land. He would never have grudged it, if he could have hoped that his death would do more than his life."—*From Lady Cavendish's Letter.*

ERIN ! and is the wound that rankles yawning
Beneath thy emerald robe so hard to heal ?
Are thy sad eyes dulled to the beams of morning,
Which slow and still upon the long night steal ?
Tears thou art shedding, now shamed to contrition
By the red stain their brine can ne'er efface ;
Yet, as they cleanse the sight for clearer vision,
Stark victims claim them of a humbler race.

Ah, beautiful and erring ! wronged and wronging !
How grows thy tragic tale on History's page !
Thy youthful dreams and pure, impassioned longing,
Then all the baffled struggle and the rage.
The star of learning paling o'er thy towers—
The foreign sceptre, the religious yoke,
Laying their burden on thy free-born powers,
Till the bruised spirit of the Celt awoke.



But what availed ? The cry was wild with passion—
The waking cry, and the oppressor smiled ;
Nor king nor churchman knew the sweet compassion
Which raises while it quells the recreant child.
As from the thunder-cloud the lightning dartles,
That long had waited the electric shock,
A nation's heart-throb beats so strong, it startles
Those, who will sleep once more to rise and mock.

Reduced again ! thy thought again was treason.
Ah ! held in bondage and in prison blind,
How couldst thou follow where the light of reason
Revealed the powers that gently loose and bind ?
No more Saint Gall, or, high of heart, Columba,
Or noble Patrick, trod thy shores and woods ;
While of their followers a glorious number
Were laid to rest where cloistral silence broods.

Let none rebuking thee, forget the beauty
Of thy first youth, O Erin ! or thy prime ;
Forget thy loyalty to God and duty,
The seed thou sow'dst for others in thy time.
Oh, lovely was thy spring ! and free the dower
Of grace and learning to the youth who came
To cultivate a vowed life's opening flower,
Beneath thy smile and in thy groves of fame.

How sweetly falls on castles old in story
The silvery veil the cold, pale moonbeams weave !
The pile monastic rears its brow so hoary,
An Oread's heart with secrets seems to heave.
The trees are whispering legends to each other
Of men who *leagued*, but for the common good—
Saw in each raw disciple Christ's young brother,
And blessed him by His Elder Brotherhood.

And lo ! the cross the circle is uniting,
Touching at angles right each arc anear :
It symbols Calvary's sign, the world inviting
To venture on the love that casts out fear.
Oh ! symbol of the past, who would not heed thee
In this dark hour, and ask a better day ?
Oh ! lever of the world, the world doth need thee
To lift her to God's mercy-seat alway !

Crimson the stains the emerald cannot cover ;
And deep the anguish in one woman's heart,
Who turns her woe to sacrifice, and over
Its holy altar bears a priestly part.
Her martyr's death a free-will offering,
Made hers by that same willingness, I trow ;
Her widowed life a free-will offering,
A double crown rests on her patient brow.

Her grief has touched thee, Erin, o'er the waters,
Where low thou sittest in thy grief and shame ;
Her love shall touch thee more, and Albion's
daughters

Shall cherish for thy sake her noble name.
She loves thee, Erin. Oh, thou loved and loving,
Let the warm pulses of thy heart have sway !
Learn meekness from the past, and, moving Godward,
Love like a herald shall prepare thy way.

THE HARP AND THE SINGER.

AWAKE, my harp ! From willow bough
I yearn to snatch thee, even now.
It is so long since I have swept
The strings o'er which a rust hath crept,
That I would fain inquire if clear
Thy notes shall loosen on mine ear,
And tranquillize my tortured sense
With their ethereal influence.

O harp of mine ! yet tossed so high,
Gleaming above me mournfully,
The bough sprang sharp in its recoil
As antlered deer from fallow soil,
To save thee in a proud disdain
The touch, that sought through driving rain.
The stars can see I stand so low,
I never more may reach thee so.

And, thwarted thus, I climb and strain,
Nor is the eagerness in vain ;
The willow bough that sprang so high
Must bend to earth as certainly.

Beneath the leafy screen we'll hide
And sing, though nightingales deride,
Because the starry harp hung higher
Might well *their* right of song inquire.

Oh ! is it that thou canst not find
Music for me ? The Autumn wind
Has so much more familiar grown,
With less of sadness in its moan.
Or is it that the heavy dew
Of chilly nights has melted through
Thy sweetness, till it is no more,
But caught up to the joy before ?

That were a sadness; harp of mine,
To mourn for at Apollo's shrine.
Yet tell me, did no whispering breeze
Speak of a store of memories,
Once hived as honey, changed to gall ?
By—— But on that let silence fall.
The hive thou knowest—the foolish heart
That slighted thee to nurse its smart.

Yes ; what shall now the language be,
Sobbing to mine in sympathy ?
Shall tarnished reverence, weakened trust,
High hopes ground underfoot in dust,

With fuller knowledge, deeper ken,
Be our recurring theme? What then?
Well, if these last should prove a crown,
The price was on the rack paid down.

We were so glad in early youth,
We sung of rustic love and truth;
The painted lady of the breeze,
The fawn that glanced amid the trees,
The bondage of schooldays and hours,
When bees were free to suck the flowers,
The lowing kine, the purling brook—
Mad plagiarists we from Nature's book.

Dost thou remember, silent still,
The widening stream, the steeper hill?
The music, glorying the thought
That, thirsting, woke to desert drought,
Pined 'mid an affluence of springs,
And chafed to feel the growth of wings?
The pain, whose unrest was a gain
To the tired vestal in the fane?

O sweet, sweet pain! If flowers know such,
'Tis 'neath the Spring's first quickening touch:
'Tis when the bud and leaf prick forth
Their verdure through the travailing earth.

The stream may know it, bursting free
Whence the stern glaciers held the key,
Like Lazarus from the sepulchre,
Troubled to meet the atmosphere.

It was the pain of growth, of life ;
The rarer air, the soul's first strife
To loose her fetters and spread wing
Where the lark's song falls echoing.
And, cleaving rosy clouds, mount higher,
To snatch one spark of sacred fire
From heavenly altars, and retreat
With rapture from the daring feat.

That pain is stilled. The throbbing brow
Throbs from a truer anguish now ;
The fever-strife passed with the night,
And tear-mists veiled the morning light.
A deep, deep heart ache is the curse
I dared not let thy strings rehearse,
Because, my harp, I know each tone
Must be the echo of my own.

Oh yes ! my love, my grief, my hate
Thy trembling strings will still vibrate.
The minstrel's hand may wander free,
But through it flows the soul to thee.

And the soul's burden will be thine,
Be it or earthly or divine ;
Thy strings will shiver 'neath its woe,
Or into swifter cadence flow.

The world is not what I had sung
When erst thy artless changes rung.
World heroes have abused my trust,
World gold has crumbled into dust,
All at my touch, oh, touch of Fate !
And I have learned too late, too late,
That gods upraised on feet of clay
Prove to be mortal in the way.

The child of sorrow none will steal ;
Adversity his judgment seal.
Let him creep in the shades and die,
And breathe his last resignedly ;
Or, if the writhing thing must live,
All but the fight for life forgive.
Exhort to patience, as indeed
Sole virtue to his kind decreed.

Tell him his misery to refine,
You envy him the discipline—
The fire that the gold must try,
The cloud that lids an amber eye.

And if by chance you hear his song,
Urge him the sweet notes to prolong ;
Nor Daphne's "shady honours" heed—
Self-solace is sufficient meed.

Wherefore so bitter ? Cease this strain.
The mind will wander ; but all vain
And idle as its wanderings are,
We need not seek the Wormwood star.
A blight is on our pond, for sure,
Yet keep the bitter waters pure.
Sweet harp, I'll drink them ; an God wills,
The time will come for clearer rills.

Wherefore so bitter ? Oh, forsooth !
Fancy is bright, but stern is Truth.
Hopes long delayed at last denied,
And cherished friendships failing, tried,
Make griefs that dignify while mute.
Yet thou hast lured to speech, my lute ;
For thou and I were one what times
Creation's bells rang merry chimes.

Methinks we were like Rousseau's birds,
Confabulating signs for words.
The world for such spreads myriad nets,
And some it kills and some it pets ;

Some swing content in gilded cage,
While others beat their wings with rage.
The world does nought of ill by halves,
And we're the kind of bird it starves.

We'll keep our music to ourselves,
To charm the nymphs and woodland elves ;
For you must know one voice is heard
Above each golden-fluted bird,
To listen there is such a hush,
Not soaring lark, nor happy thrush
Disturbs the sound-waves by a trill,
The nightingale is awed and still.

How altered is the orchestra,
Where all the world's musicians are !
No more of concert or stringed band,
No more in equal ranks they stand
The white-robed singers ; no more clash
The merry cymbals out, nor crash
The warrior trumpets : all make way
For the great organ's solo play.

Oh, for the chorus ! Pause so long
Is, sure, against the rules of song !
In truth, it is so richly filled
That every envious pulse is stilled.

The slighted minstrels sit in trance,
With sorrowing yet adoring glance ;
While restless lips and fingers tell
They long the sea of sound to swell.

Oh, to float outward on that sea,
From the great world's attraction free !
To learn a note from angel lyres,
To snatch a spark from Heavenly fires !
To feel the bitterness dissolve ;
Harsh discords to sweet sounds resolve !
Oh ! Thou who knowest my heart takes part
Against the agony and smart
Of riper knowledge, change my book ;
Let me on Thy perfections look,
Till, lost in wonder evermore,
These strings, so near to break, adore.

RELIGIOUS POEMS.

CHRISTMAS DAY MORNING.

THERE'S music in our hearts to-day, and on our lips
 there's song,
The bells o'er all this Christian land ring merrily and
 long ;
The busy streets from traffic cease, glad holiday to
 keep,
And children's voices early wake the mother from her
 sleep.

The anthem rises in God's house what hour the
 Sabbath crowd,
Their hearts and knees with one accord have rever-
 ently bowed ;
Both Christmas joy and Sabbath rest sit here on every
 brow,
The thank-offering precedes the feast, and hallows by
 a vow.

The fir tree and the box combine with fragrant cedar
 boughs
To make a writing on the wall for home and banquet-
 house,

To tell, in characters each heart preserveth ever green,
Of Him Whose great humility was in His advent seen.

While each prepares him for the feast, let no sad
thoughts intrude.

“Is this a day to afflict the soul?” or o’er offences
brood?

Nay, let us loose us from our bands: we’re summoned,
one and all,
To celebrate a new-born King, and keep high festival.

We’ll “eat the fat and drink the sweet” before God
in our mirth;

His sign of peace has come to us, of peace, goodwill
to earth.

Glory to Him in highest heaven! The notes that
feeble rise

From our weak lips are borne on high and echoed
'mid the skies.

Let’s spread the table in our gates, and at our hearths
prepare,

As lovers of the poor, to give His poor our special
care :

Those “for whom nothing is prepared,” of them we
think to-day,

A portion must be sent to each, for we have ours
alway.

The orphan child, the widow weak, the stranger in our land,
Should welcomed be with kindly words, and helped with liberal hand ;
While those that serve and those that rule may heartily unite
To keep the merry Christmas-tide approvēd in God's sight.

Who shall be master of the feast? Oh, let the little child
Reign o'er it henceforth, through all time, to keep it undefiled.
The Saviour set him in our midst to teach us one sweet truth—
For one day age may cede its rights to tender, guileless youth.

And 'tis a little new-born King, a mother and a Child,
Round Whom our thoughts are clustering, for Whom our gifts are piled.
Yes, verily we bring the Babe in all our love uplifts,
More welcome offerings than were found amid the Magi's gifts.

So "Merry Christmas," let it pass from lip to lip and heart,
Joy in the Lord a source of strength from which we would not part :
Good will to men of good will be ; and in each loving soul
May the Christ-child be formed to bless and sanctify the whole.

EASTER DAY.

AND thou hast dawned on us, glad Easter morning !
 New light is in our darkness sown ;
The rabble throng have ceased their scorning ;
 We keep no more sad watch alone.
We hail thee, Easter morning !—hail the Star
That kings and prophets sighted from afar.

Sweet Star, it rises o'er our heart's wild waters,
 And there it sings with single voice.
No strain commingleth from the choral daughters
 Who with the sons of God rejoice ;
Archangels o'er Love's mystery grow mute—
Hushed be each angel lyre, each starry lute.

The song is all to us : none else can sing it.
 One left her pitcher at the well,
Hearing His message, all abroad to bring it—
 The proofs that He was Christ to tell.
Let us, in glad remembrance and in verse,
The burden still to other hearts rehearse.

“Come unto Me, all ye that are so weary,
With sin and grief so sore opprest
That ye have found the earth track dull and dreary,
Longing for wings to be at rest ;
Come unto Me, ye men of aching limb,
Women who weep until your eyes are dim.

“For I will give you rest amid your anguish,
And gain to far outweigh your loss ;
Will give you strength, albeit you seem to languish,
And crown with beams of light your cross.
Within your soul shall be such deep repose,
As the world giveth not or even knows.

Oh, not as the world giveth is My giving !
Ye saw Me veiléd in a cloud ;
The eclipse is o'er, the Dead is now the Living,
A bridal garment hides the shroud
From all who follow Bethlehem's Star, until
The cloud of wrath has rolled from Calvary's hill.

“Still as a Shepherd will I move to guide you :
I guided Israel through the deep.
In places dark my torch shall flame beside you,
Till in green pastures ye like sheep
May lie you down near the still waters' flow,
And wait the golden eye that bids you go.

“ Go, where the crag is slippery and stony,
The precipice yawns unaware;
In the dark places ye shall not be lonely,
For each is My peculiar care ;
And will ye from My shining track ne'er roam,
The roughest path may prove the surest home—

“ Home to the fold. To go beyond it never,
Still, do I weary you, My sheep ?
Am I unkind each cord that binds to sever ?
To give the toil that sweetens sleep ?
Will ye choose other paths than I have trod,
And find them widen towards the Throne of God ?

“ Oh, bear your aching limbs ! your hearts of sorrow !
Since in the flesh I suffered too ;
The evil day bear for My glad to-morrow ;
Far off, but near to share with you.
To living fountains will I lead My sheep,
As erst I led sad Israel through the deep.

*THE ASCENSION—THE ANGEL'S
REBUKE.*

AND may we not, blest Lord, gaze heavenward ?

Since Thou art taken from us, shall our eyes

Look on the earth, beholding vanities ?

Is't not the upward look that worships God ?

Thou hast gone up on high : what can remain

To us who linger, but to pierce the veil

That wraps Thee from our sight ? and if our wail

Follow our gaze, forgive the orphan's pain.

Perchance the sound might grieve Thee. In the calm

We will subdue our pulses to low prayer

And tremulous praises, and no sigh of care

Shall cross the notes borne from an angel's psalm.

Our "meditation of Thee shall be sweet,"

That contemplation may beguile our day ;

And Thou mayst still talk with us by the way,

Known by the heart's glow, as shall be most meet.

O hearts that would be selfish in their love !
A bird sings looking up, but God looks down.
There is a cross to carry ere the crown
Of your joint-heirship may be worn above.

His poor are with you still, to tend and keep ;
His work is waiting for obedient hands ;
His sign must be upraised in distant lands ;
O'er many a mountain ye must call His sheep.

Look up ! that ye may catch His smile, and wear
The glory of its brightness 'mid the crowd ;
Look down, to see your duty, and be bowed
To suffer with Him, and His yoke to bear.

O Jesus ! we see blended in Thy scope
For us and ours, two lives : may we be wise
To occupy in both, until we rise
Above our dead selves to our larger hope !

The power is promised and the help is given.
Thou art gone up ; but where Thy form was lost,
Thy Dove the blank with brooding Wings has
crossed,
And, lo ! the under-blue is like Thy heaven.

“SADIE.”

“ It awakens a pathetic feeling to stir the silence falling around a reputation which, in spite of the highest promise, just failed fully to achieve itself. To ask public attention now to “ Sadie ” seems . . . as if, in the dim increasing overgrowth of a wood, you, on pulling apart boughs, disclosed a broken, unfinished pillar, hiding there in its sad beauty, and knew that the instant you withdrew your grasp the boughs would shut again, and afresh conceal behind tangled foliage the grace which ought, if fortune had only been kinder, to have stood amidst the full sunlight in the eyes of all men.”—*Day of Rest*, September, 1881.

THE boughs will close again, alas ! 'tis true,
And hide the fair white pillar brought to view ;
Yet other hands may part them in their turn,
The lovely wonder once more to discern.
The first explorer down the forest aisle
Beyond intent may other steps beguile,
To come as far to see the still, green place
Which makes a shrine for what was Sadie's grace.
The Muses kept this treasure for their own,
Unthought of, undesired, since little known.
Well may the wood a vale of Tempe seem,
To eyes that catch the marble's moonlike gleam.
For me, I look thus lingeringly to trace
Each line of the still column that had place,

Where, glistening in the sun, it might look down
On hands that slowly wrought its floral crown.
I knew not why so soon it disappeared,
Nor why no record of it was upreared.
A thing of beauty, hence a thing of joy,
The world has used it like a broken toy.
Yet all the sadness of the gloom mayn't bar
The pure beams falling from its risen star.
By the avenging "genius of disgrace,"
The Venus may be swept from Helen's face ;
But grief, neglect, have no such cruel power
O'er such as tenant this retired bower.
Beautiful Sadie, how my heart leaps forth
To meet thee once again and hear thy worth !

* * * * *

And yet shall I confess, such sadness swept
Above my musing heart I almost wept,
And every chord of feeling vibrated
The conscious shame that speaks inferior meed.
"This Memnon sings in God's own light," it said ;
"The springs of harmony are ever fed,
And ever shall be, by that glorious sun
That called in being each material one !
Yet while below, with vessels of fine gold
Sadie had been appraised, had men been told
How rare the quarry whence the marble came,
And what a rosy tint blushed on the same,
To warm the saintly whiteness, and to chase
The cold blue veins that bough-like interlace—

Ah me ! how shall the common stone endure
To stand rebuked by loveliness so pure ?
How shall the wooden vessel look beside
That wrought of gold, till seven times purified ? ”
Nursing this discontent, I went abroad,
To bow with others in the House of God.
Not by confession or on words of prayer
Did my thoughts rise into an ampler air ;
Nor did the stately anthem, with the swell
Of choral praises, my remonstrance quell.
The earthen vessel said unto the Hand
That fashioned it, “ Alas ! how shall I stand
And hold Thy treasure in Thy courts above,
Where all is purity and light and love ? ”
With “ It is written ” came the answer still,
As it must ever to the tempted will.
Two verses from the Book had scarce been read,
Before conviction swept the words they said
With a great wakening light into my heart,
Deepening the while, they soothed its hidden smart.*
I knew then that the gold had been prepared
For golden uses, and the furnace dared
For issues finer ; brass for brass ordained,
Iron ore for iron, wood for wood ingrained.
Withal there should be many an onyx stone,
Many a glistening one, and gem that shone ;
But as the graver’s tool had keenly bored,
The brilliant surface brightening as it scored,

* 1 Chronicles xxix. 2.

And many a jewel darkly set must show,
In the dark setting, a diviner glow.
While marble stones, in rich abundance stored,
Might well befit a temple of the Lord.
Yet since therein He needeth clay and wood,
Dare I repine? nor call dishonour, good?
Why hast Thou made me thus, since Thou hast made
Others to honour, and hast honour laid
Upon them like the crown of man's desire,
Keeping to uses low who covet higher?
Ah no! to wooden uses put Thy wood,
To clay Thy clay: Thy purpose understood
Shall make us thankful for the gift we bear,
To occupy therewith our earnest care.
We were not fashioned for ourselves, but Thee.
Sweet to be kept for Thee eternally;
And sweeter still to find our special use
In the peculiar service thou dost choose.
Sing on, dear Memnons, in the great God-light,
And charm our ear withal and glad our sight.
Sing! If the Light that strikes you into song
Strike us to dumbness, who would suffer wrong?
Our voices are not needed. For the task
He set us to fulfil He sure will ask.
The clay shall not the gold's rebuke endure;
Nor cleansing fires its loveliness ensure;
Nor must the wood support the iron's strain,
The highest souls have "competence to pain."
Or if resources small the thought that smites,

Oh, princely she, who only gave two mites !

* * * * *

What wonder in our sun that Sadie's song

Bore all the sadness of the night along

Its rhythmic pauses, that each golden tone

Vibrated 'neath a sorrow all her own.

More wonder that no music chord ere flew

Beneath the tension ; that each stronger grew,

Ceasing from music but when she ceased too.

For all who thought this monumental Sadie

A highly favoured and free-hearted lady,

Whose life so little knew of sternly real

For woe she needs must draw on the Ideal,

And thought that in her short but glorious noon,

Her joy-notes to mankind were richer boon ;

Knows now the thorns that fenced her rose of June,

The clouds that flecked her little harvest moon.

Sweet, suffering Sadie, resolutely brave,

As the world smiled, more surely yawned the grave !

Deep is the mystery, but this holds true,

God by the suffering more ennobled you ;

Entwining with your wreath the martyr's palm,

Chastening your poet fervour to the calm

Imperial, regal, that 'mid "groves of balm "

His victors wear, raising their angel psalm.

MEMORIAL LINES.

“ Howl, fir tree ; for the cedar is fallen.”

“ **H**E blew with His winds : ” with a mighty wind
That swept o'er the surging waters ;
On the sandy plain fell the traveller blind,
And pale grew Affliction's daughters ;
There was heard a sound 'mid the cedar trees,
But our hearts did not faster beat for these.

Yet heavy and dull did we hear a fall
Through the first sad hours of morning,
The dark had spread o'er the dawn like a pall,
And the blast struck notes of warning ;
And we said, “ Near the stately cedar trees
May we look for the spoiler's ravages.”

But ah for our fears ! they had gone to seek
The young tree prone in its greenness ;
The rosebush despoiled, the fair and the weak
Brought low by the north wind's keenness :
We had little deemed that our rifled land
Must mourn for the stately, the nobly grand.

In the cedar grove is many a rift
Which tells of departed glory ;
The winds at His Word did the strong uplift,
Nor reverenced the leaf-crown hoary.
Howl, fir tree ! howl for the cedar tree !
Would the tears were amber that fall from me !

* * * * *

“ Within the Veil.”

Within the veil ! within the veil !
Beyond the reach of woe and ail,
And shining like the sun,
They sit in bowers of Paradise,
Tears wiped for ever from their eyes,
Whom we lost, one by one.

Singly from out this Baca vale,
Beyond the hearing of our wail,
Have silent passed us by
The sage who bade us toil and think,
And held us trembling o'er the brink
Of many a mystery :

The poet whose sweet muse, unbound,
Could lure us from the weird profound,
Towards the upper blue :
The woman-genius who might wake
To issues fine the soul, and make
Light aims both pure and true :

The statesman with his subtle brain,
And skill to weave the complex chain
Which bindeth men by laws :
The pastor, on whose thoughtful brow
God's chrism rested, and the vow
To live—but for His cause :

A Chrysostom, of golden mouth,
Who brought sweet spices from the south
To glad the Heavenly Spouse ;
And called by clarion, wooed by lute,
The cold, the careless, and the mute
To throng the Banquet House.

The gentle knight who yearned to see
God's banners waving wide and free,
And whose untiring zeal
Was bent to bear the uncurtained ark
Where thousands might be drawn to mark
The covenant blood and seal.

Jesus, since Thou hast entered in,
Wilt Thou reprove our grief as sin ?
Or stoop to comfort us ?
Thou art our Hope, Thou art our Love ;
Our treasure is with Thee above,
Yet are we mourning thus.

*“SHOW US THE FATHER, AND
IT SUFFICETH US.”*

IN MEMORY OF H. R. U.

WHAT else sufficeth? Long and sadly sought
That questioning mind, of teachers, high enthroned
In the proud halls of Science. Low he bowed
To the pale kings of thought, and followed quick
Upon the track of those who bold assayed
To explore the world of matter, and make spoil
Of the grave secrets that, unspoken, bind
Suns and their systems to an equal course.
He would unbraid the tresses of the light,
And rend her amber raiment, to declare
What gave the beauty, how the woof was woven;
And ever in shy wonder seemed to ask,
“Is this, we chance on, Nature? Is it God?”
And God revealed Himself, Infinite Mind
Passed by him, as by Moses in the cave—
The partial sight, too much for finite gaze.
When, lo! another Presence came between,
And said, in tones that melted fear in love,
“Ye that believe in God, believe in Me!”

And he believed ; for as his dying eyes
Turned from the sunset sky, the burnished sea,
His lips moved, not to question, but to pray.
The Gospels were preferred to the vexed themes
That erst had been his pleasure. Now the soul,
Free from the narrow prison, has set forth
Upon the tracks he loved ; again he sees
Light, but 'tis in the radiant light of Him
Who is the Source and Father of all lights ;
With Whom there is no shadow and no change.
Methinks, if we could catch the cry that breaks
From his adoring lips, it would be still,
“ Show us the Father, and let that suffice.”

TO THE MEMORY OF E. M.,

WHO FELL ASLEEP IN JESUS, OCTOBER 29TH, 1878.

SLEEPING she shall do well, for she had kept
Long vigils by the couch of those she wept
And gave God thanks for, ere He sent her too
The arrow in the breast for token sure :
She knew, and hailed it, patient to endure,
And willing still to suffer as to do.

Her sleep is not the sleep of folded flowers,
That wait the sun's heat on their chilly bowers
To ope their dainty colours and hived sweets ;
It is the sleep of winter, and must last
Unbroken till the chill and gloom are past,
And the glad spring earth's wakened nurslings greets.

Her home is like a rosebush that the wind
O'erpasses with strong wings and breath unkind,
To shake and tear and ruthlessly deflower.
Who sees the scattered roses and the leaves,
Whose sweetness linked no more a gay crown weaves,
Thinks sadly of the lone ones in their bower.

Herself was like a little violet,
Content in the green wood's deep heart, and yet
 Alluring by its fragrance on the wind :
Oh, such was Emily ! Who knew her knew
The tribute shunned was never o'er her due,
 So rich in grace of God, so pure of mind.

Ay, weep for her who knew her ; but be sure
Her influence is not lost ! That shall endure
 And deepen, broaden in a fairer clime.
Who prized the box of alabaster shed,
A medicative nard, upon His head,
 Made it a fragrant memory for all time.

Who gathered up the crumbs, that none might lie
Wasted amid profusion, will plant high
 His human flowers that precious perfume bear.
Walking amid His pleasant fruits, He'll bid
His fair companions mark them, as He chid,
 'Mid the field-lilies, man's corrosive care.

TO THE MEMORY OF RUTH ELLIOTT,

WHO FINISHED HER CAREER OF LOVING SERVICE
ON EARTH, OCTOBER 25TH, 1878.

SHE too is gone ! I knew her not, and yet
I mourn her as I had done, and had met
Her some day, somewhere, and her hand had ta'en
Within my own, and spoken of the strain
Of constant striving for the world's slow ear ;
Smiled back her smile and answered to her tear.
But, no, my fellow-worker ! In your books
To me alone were mirrored your dear looks.
And strange it seems ; *you* taken and *I* left !
I, who for rest and home have oftentimes wept ;
And you, who might be well contented here,
Fulfilling in your toil a perfect sphere.
Your thoughts will live and grow ; but nevermore
Shall ache of head or eyelid be in store,
Or effort of production leave you weak,
Without the memory the dream to speak
That passed, but left its burden. God is love !
He hides from tempest and from storm His dove ;
But leaves the bird of careless wing to rough
The bitter winds, long ere He says, "Enough ! "

IMPORTUNITY.

HE standeth knocking at the door.

“ O Lord ! how long ? how long ?

Weeping, Thy patience I adore,

And yet the bars are strong.

Lord, draw them for me, for my hand is weak,

The night is chill. Enter Thou till the streak

Of ruddy morning flush the day's young cheek !

He standeth knocking, knocking still.

“ Sweet, pleading voice, I hear.”

The mist is rolling from the hill,

The fourth slow watch is near :

Through the small lattice I beheld His face,

In the cold starlight, full of pitying grace,

Yet—how to guest Him, in so mean a place ?

He standeth knocking, knocking loud !

Yes ! for the timbers creak.

Eastward there low'rs an angry cloud ;

“ Sweet Saviour, hear me speak.

Oh, bide not there to feel the drenching rain !

I bid Thee welcome ; but in grief and pain

Tell Thee, my strength against these bars is vain.”

He standeth knocking, knocking oft,
The day of grace wears on ;
The chiding Spirit whispers soft,
“ Perchance He may be gone
While thou still lingerest.” “ Not the bars alone
Keep Thee out, Lord : against the door is thrown
Sand-bags of Care and hoarded gains and stone.”

He standeth knocking, knocking faint.
“ Blest Saviour, leave me not ;
But let me tell Thee my complaint,
The misery of my lot ;
And let me sweep the floor Thy feet must press,
Deck myself royally for Thy caress,
Make myself worthy, ere Thou stoop to bless ! ”

He standeth knocking, knocking still.
“ Lord, help me in my doubt:
Must I put forth this feeble will
To draw Thee from without ?
Then help my weakness.” Hear each stern bar give,
The door flies backward : He but whispers, “ Live ! ”
While on His patient breast I, weeping, plead, “ For-
give ! ”

*“WHY ART THOU CAST DOWN,
O MY SOUL?”*

“HE has forsaken me, and I am weary
Of journeying on a path so dark and dreary.”

“And wherefore is it drear? The birds are singing
From boughs that shadows on the shine are flinging.”

“I hear no music when one Voice doth fail me;
My light is quenched. Can day’s high noon avail me?”

“And wherefore did He leave thee in thy sorrow?
He will return and comfort thee to-morrow.”

“Alas, my sins me from His love did sever!
His chidings I thought hard, repining ever.”

“But He is gracious; quick is His relenting;
From far He sees the signs of thy repenting.”

“Alas, too late, I mourn! He’ll let me wander
Cheerless, alone, my lost estate to ponder.”

“ For His forsaking, He more close will press thee
Where the sword pierced, and surely there will bless
thee.”

“ Ah, no ! His foes His footstool are, kept under
By Him, who fain had plucked their bars asunder.

He wipes the tears from off the children’s faces,
And with the kiss of peace the bride embraces.”

“ O sorrowing soul ! such grief might be thy token,
'Tis not the slave's will, but the child's heart broken ;

'Tis not the rebel by his wrath o'ertaken ;
It is the bride, one little hour forsaken.

The rebel frets not that his lord's afar,
The slave holds revel 'neath the morning star ;

But spouse and children yearn for His returning,
And keep to welcome it the hearth-fires burning.”

“ CHILDREN, HAVE YE ANY MEAT ? ”

CHILDREN, have ye any meat, that ye do not come
near

The table that I spread for you, with wine and good-
liest cheer ?

My white and purple grapes hang low from boughs
that arch it o'er,

Nor fruit so luscious and so rich the vines of Eschol
bore.

My Banquet House is all adorned to glad My feastful
friends,

While on each pause, from harps unseen sweet melody
attends.

Come, my belovéd, eat and drink ; the Father's hand
is free ;

No price upon these plenteous stores that was not paid
by Me.

Children, have ye any meat, that still ye love to
roam ?

There's milk to satisfy the babe, there's honey in the
comb ;

I've flagons for the sick and faint, I've apples sweet
and red,
Will ye not taste the pleasant fruits with which My
board is spread?

Children, come. Your fathers thought to feed on
angel's food,
The manna-fall around the camp was plentiful and
good,
The flinty rock was cleft to let the crystal fountain
play,
Yet they again knew want and thirst through many a
weary day.

Whoso at My table sits, he shall both eat and live:
No bread, no meat can satisfy like that I yearn to
give.
Forsake the cisterns ye have hewn, for he that drinks
with Me
Shall find the living stream refresh his thirst eternally.

Wherefore waste your little gains on that which is not
food?
Wherefore resist the claims of love, of grace, and
Fatherhood?
Or do ye fear because your robes are travel-stained
and torn?
I can renew them and give back the dews of life's
young morn.

If ye will but come and dine, in answer to My call,
A spotless robe awaits each guest, laid in My tiring-
hall ;
Each shall be jewelled as a bride, and sit in raiment
fair ;
Defilement upon those I love My pure eyes could not
bear.

Children, have ye any meat, that still I call in vain ?
Night-mists are on the mountains hoar, they creep
along the plain.
Are ye so happy while ye choose far from My side to
roam ?
Are husks so grateful to your taste ? and is the desert
Home ?

SONNETS.

MORNING PRAYER.

I

WAKING from slumbers of the night, the Jew
Hastes to observe the ceremonial law
By his ablutions ; and, as if he saw
In Death's fair image its uncleanness too,
He hurries from his brow sleep's balmy dew ;
Then pours the crystal stream to lave his hands
With fingers separate. Since he may not take
Five steps to seek the purifying lake,
Within five of his couch it alway stands,
For the immediate plunge the law demands.
Alas ! how many steps we sometimes make
Into the busy day, with scarce a breath
'Gainst the corruption of a moral death,
Yet there's a fountain near us when we wake !

II.

And if our first step found us on its brink,
Ready to plunge anew beneath its tide,
How might we wash till seven times purified !
And sink to rise, and rise again to sink !
How should we find more than we ask or think—
Rest from the evil day ! Such strength and hope
As old-world warriors never knew to cope
With giants of our Canaan ! faith to link
The day's adversities with God's full scope
And trust without the tracing ! Morning prayer
Might save us many a backward step and loss ;
Might woo God's Dove to rest upon our cross,
And keep our hearts unsullied by world-care.

VOICELESS PRAYER.

TIMES there are with us, when we cannot word
The prayers which mount from the perturbèd heart
Up to God's throne. Are, then, such prayers unheard?
We are like Hannah when her lips were stirred
The while no sound escaped. The inward smart
Was witnessed in their tremor. Yet, white-stoled,
Her heart's desire stood after in the fane
Which was the world's pure wonder. Awed, yet bold,
Let us bow silent heads, nor think that vain,
E'en though the agony remain untold.
God needeth not for praise cathedral strain ;
Nor reckoneth He our thanks by gifts of gold.
The songless bird, if loving, God doth love ;
Not more his lark loud-singing than His dove.

A CANDLESTICK OF PURE GOLD.

"Of beaten work shall the candlestick be made. . . . All it shall be one beaten work of pure gold."—EXODUS xxv. 31, 36.

GOD laid affliction on my friend, so keen,
That I, who knew the patience of her past,
And felt the hot breath of her furnace blast
Sing me while yet afar, said, "What can mean
This seven times heating more than all has been?
If the fine gold can finer be, what cast
Shall the pure metal take, fined to the last?"
"The candlestick shall be of *beaten* gold,"
To my dull heart and ear a voice replied.
"O thou that questionest; couldst thou but behold
The lovely vessel that the purified
And hard wrought gold shall fix in, light to hold,
Thou for thyself wouldest blows and heat desire—
My Hand upon the ore when cleansed by fire."

WAKING UP.

I.

How in one rushing moment do we learn
What the long patient years have failed to teach,
And all the voices lifted up to preach
God's message to us. That we might discern
How to be workers with Him in the end
That most concerned us, and might be so still
The while we wrought, as ne'er to mar or rend
His beauteous purpose by opposing will !
Alas ! we spoil His aims, and wake too late
To feel what we have done, and cannot sate
Our penitence with tears ! We see so clear
What might have been and is, and that 'twas Love
We strove against and wounded in our fear,
Earth drawing stronger than the House above.

II.

And yet there's comfort even in the fact
Of waking up. God has His own sweet way
Of bringing us to knowledge of each act,
That was not of the faith that brought the day
Of our salvation in. "So slow of heart!"
Is His upbraiding, and such accents mild
Could but be spoken to the grieving child ;
We hear them not as slaves. Nay, we bear part
Against ourselves. There had been no mistake
Had we but waited upon smile and frown.
Loss to our souls as punishment we take,
Yet think not that we lose our souls, forsake
The fight and race. Some gems have fallen down
From the crown meant for us ; but not the crown.

INTO GREEN PASTURES.

INTO green pastures hast Thou led me, Lord,
And where the quiet waters glide along,
Bearing a lighter burden than my song,
Which scarce beneath the joy finds voice or word.
Over the mountains have I strayed, a sheep
Finding no echo to my bleat, till Thou,
Seeing me yearning for the fold, didst keep
My feet from further wanderings ; and I now,
Sweet Shepherd, praise Thee for the love which
sought,
And out of mazy wilds deliverance wrought.
Oh, by these gentle means restore my soul !
That, as the lamb for sacrifice was white,
And offered without blemish to the sight,
I may upon Thine altars be laid whole.

SONG.

THERE is not, in this world of tears,
 One place where God is not ;
There is no heart o'erwhelmed with fears,
 Save where He is forgot.
Then, weeping one, arise and pray ;
For thee joy cometh with the day.

There is no deer by archers pressed
 For whom He weaves not shade ;
Nor dove forsaken, uncared,
 He wooes not in the glade.
Then, wounded, flee to Him for cure,
Or, lone, where'er He may allure.

But, oh ! shouldst Thou allure us, Lord,
 Who long for dewy meads,
To loose of love the silken cord
 Where wide the desert spreads,
Vouchsafe Thy Spirit still to bless,
And guide us through the wilderness.

Or if with gladness Thou shouldst crown
These heads that long have bowed,
Shouldst rain the smile which erst the frown
Hath hidden like a cloud,
Then make us wise, that we may be
Twice crowned by our humility.

In our adversity and wealth
We feel an equal need ;
Through nights of sickness, days of health,
Ripe grain and hidden seed :
Yet since our weakness we confess,
Keep us in vale and wilderness.

“TAUGHT OF GOD.”

“It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God.”—JOHN vi. 45.

OH! is not here a promise to nerve the weakest heart,
When earthly cisterns fail it, and earthly lights depart?
When the fierce trial's wherefore is little understood,
And the working of the “all things” assures no
earthly good?

When Science is all helpless to aid the scattered
thought,
And all of human teaching with ignorance is fraught?
When making for the haven there cometh darkly
night,
Or buckling on the armour, the foe looms into sight?

Or, in extreme of weakness and agony of trust,
Behold my hand is feeble : Thou, O God, art just !
The sickle is so heavy, the reaping is so hot ;
Dost Thou not count my pulses ? my frame hast Thou
forgot ?

Why sendest Thou me, fainting, when stronger ones
are Thine,
The full-eared corn to garner and prop the tender
vine?
Oh ! not because I need thee, or thou art less My
care ;
Or that I would put on thee a load thou can'st not
bear.

But that e'en in thy weakness My strength may perfect
be,
And every cord be silken which binds thee close to
Me.
Then learn the lesson meekly, take knowledge of the
Word
Which I, the Lord, have spoken, and thou art taught
of God.

Oh, sweet, sweet condescension ! oh, wondrous word,
of grace !
Who would not for such teaching the discipline em-
brace ?
Kissing the hand uplifted that hides the healing
balms,
We read the name He cherished and graved upon His
palms.



To learn Earth's tongues we struggle, and yet their
sound will cease ;
Systems of Thought we ponder that soon must know
decrease ;
And whether there be knowledge, that too shall pass
away ;
And lamps of men's own lighting die in God's clearer
day.

But, taught of Him, what lesson shall he who learned
unlearn ?

What ache of heart e'er trouble the hearts that toward
Him yearn ?

"Fair with the soul's expansion," sits Mary at His feet,
Unchanged the theme she ponders, but far more full
and sweet.

In fair and stately temples our teachers we enthrone ;
This stoops to our clay dwelling, and makes it all His
own ;

And in the contrite spirit doth throne and altar raise ;
His own, the gift we offer ; His sacrifice, our praise.

And highest honour hath he, the scholar in his
school ;

Though humbly here he sojourns, wayfaring man and
fool ;

Purer than streams Idalian, the rill that sings below,
The shadows of world-trials, glad in its onward flow.

And costlier than rubies the wisdom he has sought,
Where angels pause in wonder before the Eternal
thought :

The poor man knows its secret, and yet the depth
and height

May ne'er be comprehended but by Love's Infinite.

For us, and for our teaching, He maketh earth so
fair ;

Clothing its breast with verdure, with rainbow tints
the air ;

Giving the hours their coolness, their fever, and their
dew ;

Blighting the life in winter the spring-time shall
renew.

He gives the wolds their freedom, the hills their
majesty ;

The lights and shades and colours their wondrous
harmony ;

The poplar trees that shiver, the willows green that
weep,

The aspens all that quiver, the oaks that broadly
sweep,

Each its peculiar beauty of grand, or bold, or sweet,
That we, by them instructed in the Divine complete,
May in each new expression adore the wondrous skill
Which tunes the ocean chorus, the song of mountain
rill.

So we are taught by beauty, and touched by the ideal,
That we on angels' ladders may rise above the real ;
We have no hidden feeling, no instinct fine, or sense,
Which knows not by vibration the outer influence.

O God ! Almighty Artist ! could we the secret find,
Whereby to loose Orion, or Pleiades to bind,
What would the knowledge 'vail us, if we should miss
the grace
Which clothes with so much beauty the exile's dwelling-place ?

He elevates by beauty, by suffering perfects us,
That so He may exalt us, He may abase us thus.
Yea, even our Great Exemplar the path of pain must tread,
And, perfected by suffering, must bow His sacred Head.

Ay, learn of Him, ye suffering ; ye meek and lowly, come :
His cross shall be your refuge, its shadow be your home.
The Father's Word Incarnate, touched by your human woe,
Shall speak the Father's pity, in accents clear and low.

O Wonderful ! O Teacher ! O merciful High Priest !
Who, though Divine, bore smiting, and, Lord of all, was
least ;
We learn in all Thy meekness Thy fellowship of
grief—
That in Thy tender pity may be our sure relief.

Christ is the great Exponent to human hearts of God ;
'Twas to reveal the Father He 'mid the children trod.
My soul, track then His footsteps on Sharon's fra-
grant hill ;
By Galilee's lone waters and Siloa's sacred rill ;

Amid the throng which pressed Him, amid the poor
He taught ;
Amid the crowd who mocked Him, amid the lost He
sought ;
'Neath the cold taunt of stranger, and 'neath the licitor's
rod,
Track Him as thine Exemplar, and thou art *taught of
God.*

Oh, thinking on world-beauty, thinking on human ill,
I learned of this great mystery ; thinking, I grew so still.
I said, " Let me walk humbly, and question not the
past,
Nor mourn o'er shattered idols or flowers nipped by
the blast."

'Twas that I might see clearly, my eyes were drenched
with tears ;
'Twas that I might be rev'rent, my love has mingled
fears ;
'Twas that I might be grateful, my comforts were with-
drawn ;
The night-time lasted only that bright might be the
dawn.

Thy ways, O God ! are wondrous ; Thy paths are in
the deep,
Where never plummet soundeth. Who can Thy counsel
keep ?
Yet sure is every promise as each obedient star
Which moves where Thou appointest, and holds its
course afar.

May we by Thy creation, where'er we may explore,
Learn of Thy works Thy praises, and with Thy saints
adore ;
In that which is beyond us, learn of Thy Infinite ;
And where our weakness trembleth, learn of Thy power
and might.

Most by the Holy Scriptures, by Prophecy and Psalm,
By Law awaking terrors, and Gospel breathing balm ;
Most by the Word Incarnate, and by the path He
trod,
As our alone Exemplar, may we be *taught of God*.

"WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?"

OH, beautiful thoughts do we think of Thee now !
The world has awoke to the light on Thy brow ;
Eyes strain to the winepress acquainted with grief,
That the sight of Thy patience may be their relief.

The beauty men saw not is now our desire ;
We praise it with harps and with lips touched with
fire.

'Mid thousands and thousands the Chiefest art Thou
No throne is so high as the cross where we bow.

No crown is so royal as Thy crown of thorns,
No robe like Thy purple its wearer adorns ;
No unguent soft-dropping, or tears for the dead,
Are precious as Thine over Lazarus shed.

The cunning right hand may loosen or bind,
Its magic has never brought sight to the blind ;
Its exquisite touch cannot soften the smart
Of the wounded in spirit, the broken in heart.

Nor ever was hand-clasp so warm and so sweet,
As answered to hers who sate low at Thy feet ;
No kind father's arms round his prodigal thrown,
Did ever assure of such love as Thine own.

And never did weary head lean on a breast,
So tender as that Thy belovéd one prest ;
What marvel his soul was all flooded with love,
And his soaring wing tamed to the peace of the dove !

The dark aisles of Time the echoes prolong,
Of those whose thoughts burned, and whose language
was song ;
But deep is the hush when, from mountain and sea,
The sweet winds are wafting a story of Thee.

Oh, many a time, in the darkness of night,
A form has been seen that has caused us affright !
But fear has been changed to the gladdest surprise
When Jesus has stood revealed to our eyes.

'Mid shadows as dread as the homes of the dead,
With our hearth flames extinguished, our earthly joys
fled,
O'er taken we've been by a Hand that has torn
And smitten most sorely our spirit's forlorn.

Oh, cruel, my foe ! How canst thou contend
In secret with me, who have none to defend ?

But day-dawn appearing, the rod we have kissed,
So satisfied *Thou* shouldst correct as *Thou* list.

Lord Jesus, for Thine appearing we wait,
And, patient, our "faith's expectation" is great;
We comfort each other with thoughts that still yearn
Love's mystery with angels to ponder and learn.

Sweet subtleties now of reason and speech,
Are ever at work Thy blest secrets to reach;
And free as a fountain, and sparkling as wine,
Are the praises outpoured on that great love of Thine.

"What think ye of Christ?" Oh, He is the theme
Of song in the night! of vision and dream!
The world laid in sin, and her sight it was dim,
But a thousand tongues tell what we think of Him.

Could the cross that He died on bloom all around,
And the flowers and fruits of the love that has wound
Over and down it, be symbolled, we'd see
That never has earth nursed so fruitful a tree.

What think'st Thou of us? Ah, Jesus, in pain
Full often against us we hear Thee complain!
But grant us in heaven, upon the white stone,
To read how *peculiarly* each was Thine own.

*"I WILL TRUST AND NOT BE
AFRAID."*

If I had known how surely
In time I should be brought
Through all the ills that threatened
And all the mischief wrought,
I had rested calm and patient,
In the hope of God's good "thought."

If I had known the hour,
That froze me with its chill,
Had seen the day-dawn rising
Above the eastern hill,
In truth I had not murmured,
I had waited and been still.

If I had known the waters
Had stood upon a heap,
That so a way might open
E'en through the trackless deep,
I had sung a song of triumph,
And forborne to moan and weep.

If I had known ! what honour
Had my faith done to Him,
Who could not make His purpose
Subserve my childish whim,
And yet could fill with blessing
My small cup to the brim ?

If I had known the occasion
I lost had ne'er been mine,
The occasion for faith's triumph,
Its hold on things Divine,
Its sweet and hallowed shelter
In the mercy-seat's deep shrine.

If I had known ; yet knowing
My failures in the past,
Let me be wise in future,
To bend before the blast—
To hold my course rejoicing,
Though the sky be overcast.

Let me my song remember,
When cold beneath night's shade,
And promise I will trust Him,
I will not be afraid ;
But in His strength encounter
E'en my last foe undismayed.

So over the dark mountains,
My soul shall upward soar,
To where night's spectres vanish,
The eternal Day before,
And God's mysterious counsels
His saints praise evermore.

A BIRTHDAY PETITION.

AFTER READING PSALM LXXI. 14-24.

Of Thee, O Lord ! I ask a birthday-gift,
And I have spent this day alone with Thee,
Yearning from the TO BE the veil to lift,
And know Thy perfect will concerning me :

And reading backward all the little book
That keeps the record of my silent years ;
Still needing from it to the Cross to look,
Lest I should be confounded by my fears.

Yet bold I ask Thee for a birthday-gift,
Some token of Thy favour unto me ;
I, whose lute owns to many a fatal rift,
When praise inspires a happy song to Thee.

I, who among the children am the least,
Unworthy of the crumbs the guests let fall,
Who sit like priests and kings at the glad feast,
And of Thy Presence make their banquet-hall.



I dare, reading the record of these years,
Knowing the page is darker to Thine eye,
Look upward to Thee through beseeching tears,
And importune Thee for a boon so high.

For Thou hast taught me from my early youth,
And sought me in all wanderings from the way,
Shown me the beauty of the Incarnate Truth,
And been my strength through many a weary day.

And still, 'mid troubles manifold and sore,
I look to Thee to quicken me again,
That, comforted on every side, once more
I may proclaim Thy faithfulness to men ;

And, talking of Thy righteousness, rejoice,
With lips aye ready to burst forth in song,
The soul's sweet under-music in the voice,
That never, save in weakness, can be strong.

Without a birthday-gift from Thee, my heart
Must miss the very thing it holds most dear.
Why should I pass these hours alone, apart,
If not o'er all Thy voice to hear more clear?

They wish me many birthdays, whom I love,
And happy always in their quick return ;
Thy counsel is their kindly thought above,
And hard the lessons I may have to learn.

Upon my day full soon may fall the night,
The hours of sunshine wear away in pain,
The Valley's shadow suddenly affright—
Oh, how I need Thee with me to sustain !

Some token of Thy love Thou wilt afford,
Some special token ere my eyelids tire :
I hear Thee ask, "What wilt thou?" Father! Lord!
The child's best benison is my desire.

Dost Thou not feel my kiss upon Thy feet?
Oh, for Thine back, that speaks so much forgiven !
Uprise me to receive, as token sweet,
The kiss of peace, earnest of more in heaven.

That with its glow on my uplifted brow,
I may not fear for what the year may bring,
Not e'en the Valley's dark ! I think *that* now
Must be the shadow of Thy folding wing.

LIVE STONES.

THROUGH the long watches of the night,
The soul contended with her mate ;
Crying, “When dawns the morrow’s light,
On God doth praise in Zion wait ?”

Again the vow shall be renew’d,
Again the anthem’s peal shall rise ;
While waiting souls, with strength endued,
Again shall plume them for the skies.

O weary strife of flesh and blood !
O secret rack of nerves unstrung !
O present ill and longed-for good !
O heart with fleshly anguish wrung !—

Thine be to languish through the hours,
To seek for victory over pain ;
For while its force controls thy powers,
Is not the chastisement in vain ?

The silver chimes of morn rung out,
Two, three, and four ; 'twas darkness all :
The anguish unassuaged, the doubt,
Pressed on the spirit like a pall.

“ For, oh ! ” she said, “ what stone resists
The hand that moulds it for its place ?
Ah, if that Hand in wrath desists,
And spares the discipline of grace !

“ Fain would I passive lie, but find
Rebellious nature ne'er laid low.
I shiver in the temp'ring wind ;
I quiver 'neath the mallet's blow.

“ Shall I for this be cast aside,
Unmeet for temple of the King,
Which must be jewelled as a bride,
And sanctified for worshipping ? ”

But with the light of morning broke
A light from which her darkness fled ;
And 'twas as if an angel spoke
Words sweet as oil upon the head.

Are God's stones, then, insensate clay ?
Or *live* to feel each blow He deals ?
And wouldst thou, on the sheltered way,
Escape the storm thy human feels ?

That were rebellion ; but the tear
That speaks thy anguish is not so :
The outward writhing and the fear,
The chastened child can ne'er forego.

As from a healing touch, the brow
Grew calm as infancy in sleep ;
The spirit ceased from storm, to know
How full and perfect was God's peace.

And though not hers in holy fane
Or 'mid the throng to seek His face,
She owned the baptism of pain
Had been as true a means of grace.

A SICK-ROOM EXPERIENCE.

THEY must not leave you here, my bird, your song is
sharp as sweet,
Its arrows stir each heavy pulse into a swifter beat ;
Your notes from out your cage are strong, are pure,
are full, and free,
Pining in mine, I envy them, I must so quiet be.

They take my little bird away, all in a darkened cage ;
His joy is quenched, his song is hushed, he beats his
wings with rage :
But he will soon forget his grief, and I may hear afar,
The rapture of his soul poured out to greet the
morning star.

I love to list his tuneful lay, but cannot bear it near :
My soul is vibrant with a song that ne'er may rise, I
fear,
From out the soundless depths that keep both joy and
music barred,
With pain set like a sentinel their glad escape to
guard.

Spirits in prison, evermore, ye struggle through the
gloom,
To spurn like quickening chrysalis the barriers of your
tomb ;
Ye palpitate with hidden life, sending an urgent thrill
Through tortured nerves that long have learned their
strength is to lie still.

The amber morning from the east grows into day
full soon,
She smiles too broadly in sick eyes ; how shall I bear
the noon ?
The sun with glancing pencil flecks the shadow on my
wall,
And breaks it in the dancing leaves that crown the
poplars tall.

I drop my eyes upon their play ; but through the
blind has rolled
A molten bath, it seems to me, a laver of red gold.
Oh, draw the curtains closer still ! oh, hide it from
my sight !
I may not on such splendours look, and yet I love the
light.

'Tis only that I am so weak, the sun I may not see ;
'Tis only that I am so weak, my bird is hushed for
me.

I know not when the time will come to leave this
room of pain,
Or where, or how, God will bring back both light and
song again.

And yet the gladdest confidence springs in my heart ;
I know

I shall rejoice in these once more, for God has willed
it so.

The morning in my soul shall greet the sunshine on
the hills,

My step will linger where o'erhead the loudest warbler
trills.

Or, if not here, another light my new awakened eyes
Shall see upon the golden shore, in rapturous surprise ;
Nor shall the thunderous music, with its many waters'
roll,

Oppress and touch to sadness there the disen-
umbered soul.

Heart ! hast thou learned thy lesson right ? Oh, hear
Him only speak !—

“ Much joy have I denied thee, child, because that
thou wert weak ;

Nor hast thou laid hold on My strength, that still for
thee the harp

Of all harmonious earthly things has borne a strain
too sharp.

"Thou know'st the song of thy desire, I put it far away ;
Thou know'st the human light that lured, I quenched its little ray :
My touch upon thy feverish lids was healing, soft, and cool ;
Fain had I strengthened thee had'st thou but waited at the pool.

" Yet faint not under My rebuke ; My prisoned spirits all,
Shall leap from their captivity, hearing My judgment call.
Thy good things have I stern withheld, that I might give thee *Mine* ;
Have dashed each cup but one away, which held My last, best wine.

" Ah, I have known My thoughts to thee ! and thou shalt know ere long,
That every doubt of special love did Me especial wrong.
I grieved not for the grieving's sake ; to chide I did not seek :
"Twas not in wrath I kept thee low ; it was that thou wert weak.

I sometimes think God's flowers type each precious
saint and child,
And thou art the hid flower that sheds its fragrance
on the wild.

The incense of thy prayers and life goes forth from
thy lone room,
And sweetest light is flung to us from out thy deepest
gloom.
God's children are His precious stones ; an amethyst
art thou,
Shining through darkness like the stars that night
wears on her brow.

Thy best setting is the dark, love, so glory be to Him !
Who in His wisdom put thee where the jacinth would
show dim ;
The Lapidist who polishes and cuts his diamonds rare,
That He may give them to the Son more costly and
more fair.

On the bosom of our High Priest the amethyst will
shine,
And with the purple jacinth its rays of light combine ;
And each bright stone shall prism forth the smile of
that dear face,
That sometimes now is hidden in the mystery of grace.

Think you one gem that sparkles on that loving,
throbbing breast

Shall dim with grief, remembering the sharpness of the
test?

Nay, rather let the gold repine at the refining fire,
Or the lark i' the under heaven bewail the stoop that
raised him higher.

Be comforted. God knoweth His suffering, secret
ones;

His eye marks all their anguish, and His ear receives
their moans:

They are precious as His great ones that stand like
cedars tall,

Goodly as Saul, and chosen, and higher than we all.

He loves them, too, *peculiarly*, with *special* tenderness,
As an earthly father closest to his kind heart doth
press

The timid little weakling, who depends upon his
love,

And hides there from the storms of life like an
affrighted dove.

O wounded branch ! O violet pale ! O diamond in the
dark !

The wound, the shade, the gloom are each of *special*
love the mark ;

O secret one ! O suffering child ! thy sorrows are
most blest,
The weariness will so prepare for the eternal rest.

Oh ! if I share thy heaven, 'twill be, I fear, by fire,
And anguish deep must prelude long the raptures of
my lyre ;
But I know my Lord is loving, and the way may not
be long,
Nor the race all to the swift ones, nor the battle to
the strong.

They tell me thou art suffering, and I would that I
were near,
To whisper words of faith and love into thy patient ear—
To leave my worldliness without, and blend my soul
with thine,
To weep with thee and praise with thee in intercourse
divine.

CLAUDE;
OR,
THE PATRON'S REQUEST.

AN EARLY POEM.

—

—

*CLAUDE ; OR, THE PATRON'S
REQUEST.*

You speak to me of Gretry ; I of Claude
Will tell you, though he made no name ; perchance
It was God's will to still him, so to keep
The song and singer sacred to Himself.
Here, when he sang through the cathedral aisles,
Men listened, wept, and prayed, childlike, o'erborne
By the divine impulsions of the hour.
The angel St. Cecilia drew from heaven,*
Troubled, for healing, many a stagnant pool.
And some there were could not forget his face,
In its upliftedness and rapturousness,
But bore the memory of it to the grave.
Often they said vocal religion breathed
Through every boyish lineament and line,
Until, that silent, he still seemed to sing,
As if his soul apart followed the strain
Hushed in the Selah pause, and could not break

* “But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher
When to her organ vocal breath was given ;
An angel heard, and straight appeared,
Mistaking earth for heaven.”

DRYDEN.

Even at her own will the holy charm.
It may be that they know that face again,
In the fair land where dwells immortal youth ;
And, too, the voice, where pours immortal song,
Unfaltering, unrepressed, before the King.

It was upon a dismal night like this—
Rainy, with fitful gusts of wind that caught
The trudging traveller, then let him go,
As naught intending but a rude salute—
That all unrecognized a bishop walked
Down an old street in Durham ! 'Twas the street
Where chiefly dwelt the aristocracy,
Old Elvet, but they choose the Bailey now.
Wearied he was, and yet a frequent smile
Broke through the pensive shadow on his face,
Called into play by the discomforture
Of some who, well provided for the rain,
Exclaimed against the elements, as they
Had been the objects of a conscious spite.
Yet there was one who feared not for the night,
Nor cared to seek a shelter ; clasping hard
The iron railings of the house whereto
The bishop hastened, he took little heed
Of the vagaries of the madcap wind.
Far off the bishop saw him, and his thought
Went on the track of homeless little ones,
And Christ in these oft slighted by His friends ;
Until, on near approach, he saw 'twas not,

For loneliness or dearth the youngster stood,
With intense, quivering face that yearned and strained
To catch each note of a sweet German air,
That from a young vibrative voice arose
O'er the low sobbing music of a harp.
Gently he asked him why he lingered there.
“Do you not feel the rain, enthusiast ?
Go home now to your mother and your tasks ;
Or, if an errand sent, do not delay.
You do not heed me” (as he pulled the bell).
“Come, tell me, boy, the charm that keeps you here.
“Oh, Sir, the music is so sweet !” and quick
He moved away, as if ashamed to know
His young enthusiasm had been marked.
The bishop entered, and the harp was hushed,
The lady's hand lay listless on the strings,
And the young singer ceased her tuneful notes.
“Your lordship here on foot on such a night ?”
“Ay, madam ; I have been among my poor,
Seeing the sick and troubled, and I thought
For my refreshing I would turn in here,
And beg a song to soothe my languid mind.
Come, little Lady Lily, to my knee,
And make your audience wait the interval.
They are not all before you, for just now
I saw a little wight outside the rails,
Whose ear was keener than the wind was strong,
Contending with it for each silver note ;
And, oh, his face ! 'twas like a song unsung.

I'm sorry that I let him go, but trust
That heaven again may send him in my way.

The Lady Lily blushed, and from his knee
Slid silently, and at her mother's side
Warbled the airs she knew he most approved.
The Lady Lily was but ten years old ;
The only child of a poor Scottish peer,
Who died involved while she was yet a babe.
She had more rank than wealth, more blood than
dower,
More mind perhaps than either, and the name
Baptismal, with the title, well became
A child at once so queenly and so pure.
E'en for that age her figure was so small,
So sylphlike, though arrayed in deepest black,
That, looking on her, you might think you saw
A fairy robed in mourning for its queen.
Timid, yet confident, she stood and sang,
While the faint blush rose on her cheek grew warm
Because the bishop heard her ; and her eyes—
Her large, mild eyes—retired behind their lids
Through very fear of meeting his kind gaze.
A high, white forehead had she ; and her hair,
Glossy and dark, was parted, and then tied
With classic plainness in a knot behind.
So grave a style became her character,
Simple and childlike, serious withal :
So calm and undemonstrative, I might

Compare her to that little icy plant
That in its gentle frosting seems the type
Of maiden purity. And should you ask
What such a child might be in coming years ?
Unto what mellowness should grow the peach
The mother's beauty might the answer give,
For lovely in her prime was Lady Grey.
Cheerful she was, as the bereaved should be
Who mourn in hope ; yet from the busy world
She kept retired since her dear lord died,
Her only care the culture of her child.
So she was all to Lily that the tree
Is to the blossom, all the gardener's hand
Is to the vine in its luxuriant growth.

The song was ended, and the bishop rose
As if a thought had struck him, for he drew
The blind aside with caution.

“ Ah ! ” he said
“ There like a fascinated thing he stands.
’Tis well the rain has ceased.”

The lady rang,
And to her servant said, “ A little boy
Stands outside in the cold ; bring him to me :
Persuade him, should he seem too different.”
She was obeyed, and a reluctant youth
Was shown into the room. But when he met
The Lady Lily's gaze, steady and full,
His cheek grew warm, and his dark, speaking eye

Kindled so earnestly ; it was as if
He recognized in her, by sense divine,
A gift divine, and worshipped it and loved,
Awed to a veneration never felt
For mere external beauty or for rank.
The mother saw it, and it pleased her pride ;
The bishop saw it, and his heart was won ;
While Lily thought, " He is no outcast boy :
A mother lowly, but as kind as mine,
Takes care of him. Perchance she does not know
That he to-night is wandering in the streets."
Quite unabashed he stood, while Lady Grey,
Drawn strangely to him, took his rosy hand.
" Are you not cold ? What is your name, my child ? "
" My name is Claude."

" A French name that ? " she said.

" I am descended from a Huguenôt
Who escaped the massacre, and, leaving all
His little patrimony to his foes,
Came into England to enjoy its peace.
My name is Claude Claude, and my father's dead ;
I am my widowed mother's only son."
The tears sprang in the eyes of Lady Grey.
" Her only son, you must be very good :
The Lady Lily is my only child,
Yet each to each we are each other's all."
" Oh, Lady Lily, sing another song ! "
While Lady Grey, pleased with his artlessness,
Said, " Will you not talk to me a little while ? "

And asked his age, and where he went to school.
“ My age is twelve. I go each morn and noon
To the free school endowed for orphan boys ;
”Tis near my home in Gilesgate. There I learn
What subjects are enforced, and fain would more,
But that the tax must be on mother’s purse.
They say we’re taught enough to make us good
For desk or counter. Would that, since my lot
May be behind them, I were more content :
But, ah ! I worship music, and my heart
Must vainly yearn for it did I not go
To the cathedral, when I know the choir
Sings the full anthem.”

“ To the windows, too,
Of private houses ;” and the bishop laughed,
While the boy coloured, conscious of his crime.
Then, at her mother’s bidding, Lily sang
A song so true and tender, that its tones
Fell on the panting soul of him who heard
Like cooling dews upon a fainting flower.
He could not thank her, for his heart was full :
He left her presence but to dream of her.
And, oh ! the bishop asked him where he lived,
And promised soon to see him. He was sure
The bishop would be kind, and tell him how
To find occasion for the art he loved.
And what would Lady Lily think of him ?
Oh, she was much above him ! but she would
Think him at least well born, and gently bred—

No vulgar boy, albeit he was poor.
And then, "Claude Claude," he murmured in his
pride,
Thinking the name was stately ; he was glad
The Lady Grey had asked its origin.
Not the first time had Claude stood there, nor last ;
Though sometimes now rewarded by a glimpse
Of her who sang. A tiny hand would draw
The crimson screen aside, sweet eyes leap forth,
A smile, and she was gone. That grave, sweet smile
Grew into the boy's heart. It must be like
The smile the angels wear in Paradise ;
The sculptured saints all wore it in the aisles.
Like God's bow in the murky sky it rose
Upon his soul : when, 'mid his boyish cares
And crosses, he resolved one day to rise,
That smile was more than laurel to his hopes.

But it was strange the bishop never came ;
Weeks now had passed, they seemed as slow as years.
Had he forgotten him ? Oh yes, he had.
Engrossed by various cares, he had forgot,
As bishops may, being like other men.
But it so happened that one autumn day,
His lordship walking lonely in the woods,
Reading a manuscript, a rustle heard
Over his head, and a fine treble voice
Poured from the trees the simple melodies
The Lady Lily Grey was wont to sing.

Next, snatches from the oratorios
Were borne across the silver waves of Wear—
Borne far, as from a gold-lipped instrument,
So strong and mellow were the cadences.
The bishop stood entranced, no thought of Claude
Present to him, until the boy dropped down
Like a shot bird, but 'lighted on his feet.
“ My lord, your pardon ; for I did not know—— ”
“ Stay, songful boy, for I have yours to ask ;
That I forgot you I confess with shame.
Tell me again your name and residence,
That I may visit you.”

And Claude obliged,

A conscious blush slow stealing o'er his face.
The bishop, to retrieve his broken faith,
Promised to come or ere the sun was down.
Claude hastened home ; no song could hold him now.
“ O mother dear ! while rambling in the woods,
And singing to myself, who should I meet
But the lord bishop ? and he says he'll call
And have a word with you this very night.
Is he not kind ? He is not proud, it seems,
Or else he would have sent for you instead.”
“ He has a motive kind, I do not doubt :
But calm yourself, my boy ; I too, am glad,
Yet if you knew the great as well as I,
You would not at their notice be elate.
I would not grieve you, though. You are too young
To know the world ; nor would I undeceive

Your pure idea of its weal and woe.
God keep you guileless, and vouchsafe to guide ! ”

The bishop called ; his object was made known.
“ My friend, I find your dear boy has a voice
Might be a credit to the minster choir ;
Also I think he has superior mind.
With your consent, I'll speak to have him placed
In the cathedral. For his services
He will be educated liberally,
And I will have him taught the art he loves,
Or any other science he may choose ;
I'll help the youth to rise, if rise he will.”
The widow's answer was a gush of tears.
“ My lord, your kindness chides my faithlessness.
I knew my boy had genius, but I feared
Lest, being poor, it might be proved a curse :
I could not all unaided have it trained,
Though it has lain full heavy on my heart.
A stream may flow turned from its natural course,
Water must find its level, scholars say ;
But mind will always lag if turned aside,
Nor can it find its level while repressed
And sorely let and hindered in its aims.
So thinking, the far future seemed so dark.”
“ The brightest future may seem dark, my friend,
Because the veil is thick that hides its scenes :
The brightest scenes may need the thickest veil ;
Our richest blessings are the most disguised.”

So from this time existence changed to Claude,
The yearning pain of his young soul was stilled ;
And never did a weary traveller hail
With more delight the desert oasis
Than he the lettered page, the minimed line.
With music in his heart, he trod the aisles,
Or took his place an Asaph in the choir,
Looking in his white robes an embryo priest,
Imagining himself but little less.
And so the time passed on, and so devout
Was Lily at her prayers, she seldom missed
The morning service ev'n in winter time ;
But when she did, she knew not there was one
To mark her absence and to grieve at it.
As star vibrateth light to star,* these two
Had sympathies they little understood,
Affinities and intercourse which took
No form of words or ev'n of thought ; but when
Claude passed her in the minster, her sweet eyes,
Bent down upon the psalter, saw his face,
And felt the thrill he felt without the pain.
“ Ever in Thy courts praising Thee ! ” sang Claude ;
And then it seemed to him the minster gave
A deeper echo than had been before.
Ah, ever in those courts ! The gloomëd aisles,
The sounding arches were his dwelling-place,
His home ; and by association linked,
With two loves reverent to idolatry,

* “ Star to star vibrates light.”—TENNYSON.

The bishop and the Lady Lily Grey.
Oh ! he could love to plant his feet where'er
The bishop trod before him ; and his smile,
So freely given when the service closed,
Sunned his great gift to fuller perfectness.
And so between these two a friendship grew,
Sweet, notwithstanding inequality
Of rank and age ; no son could love his sire
More than Claude loved the bishop, who in turn
Laid plans for his advancement, but resolved
To keep them secret till a fitting time.
And at his feet, Claude learned of classic lore ;
And at his feet, his mind was drawn to think
Of his great wants, and of Christ's boundless grace
And the hid treasure of God's holy Word.

Two years had passed, and Lily came no more,
Nor her fair mother, to their wonted pew.
Claude, walking down Old Elvet, saw drawn blinds,
And in dismay he asked a servant girl
Who lived at the next house, where they might be.
“They're gone upon the Continent,” she said,
“That her small ladyship may *parlez-vous*,
Dear knows for how long ! What is it to you ?
Her ladyship perhaps is in your debt ?”
He answered not the sneer, but went his way.
Poor boy ! The arrow in his heart was sharp !
A cloud had gathered on his little sky ;
And, oh, how desolate his minster home,

How little worth his dream of wealth and fame,
When she, the genius of it all, was flown !
And so our hero drooped, as a caged bird
Will droop upon its perch, too sad to sing :
But wait a little, and your bird will sing,
And youth, though constant, cannot grieve for aye.
“She'll come again,” he said ; “and when she does,
Who knows, I may be worthy of her smile.
Oh, little Lady Lily, we are young !
My powers are not all vocal ; I may rise.
The church is open to all grades of men,
And I may wear the gown, and meet with you
On a more equal footing than you think.”

Bright hope ! the torch that lit the midnight lamp !
And gloried hours of thought else sacrificed
To his belovéd art. Albeit he knew
The silent homage rendered while he sang ;
Albeit his soul gushed out on every note,
Till oft on the great sea of melody
He felt himself borne from the actual world.
Well, time speeds on, with fleet step from the aged,
In slow, uncertain marches from the young.
‘Tis hard to think with equal foot he bears
Each of his children onward towards the goal.
Again two years had passed, and Claude still hoped
To see his child-love in her wonted place.
“Not yet,” he said ; “not till the choral white
Is laid aside for student cap and gown.”

And this he said as languidly at noon
He strolled along the pleasant banks of Wear,
And noted on the Prebend's Bridge fine forms
That wore the habit he so coveted.
Sudden a pony cantered by ; the child
Mounted thereon had archly left her groom,
And, turning round to shake her riding-whip
In mock disdain, she lost it from her hand.
“The little witch !” thought Claude, and picked it up.
And then their eyes met, and a sudden start
Proved mutual recognition. He stood pale,
Powerless to speak one word ; but she, more calm,
Said with a bow, “I thank you, Mister Claude,”
And that was all. She cantered out of sight
As if indifferent, but he marked it well
The deference of her greeting, “*Mister* Claude ;”
Before it had been Claude. They both were changed,
Both had grown shy and conscious. To his sense,
The gulf betwixt them had grown very wide ;
And yet he did not grieve. The sweet respect
With which she thanked him showed she was as meek
In her young dignity as when she first
Raised her clear voice to reach his listening ear,
Nor knew his power was greater than her own.

Again to morning prayers came Lady Grey,
With her fair daughter always by her side ;
And when once, after service, Claude passed by,
And timidly looked up to her, she smiled,

And said, in her kind, condescending way,
“ I’m glad once more to see you in the choir.
I think your voice has now a deeper ring.”
And Lily looked up with the same grave smile
That had inspired him to his nightly toils.

But soon a sorrow brooded o’er that town.
To its high places sickness came, and lo !
He, whom the churches praised, was sick to death.
“ What of the bishop ? ” whispered in the streets.
“ No change for better ; ” and the orphan wept,
And the sad widow prayed beside her hearth.
Moody sat Claude one night beside the fire,
Tired of hoping where no hope was given,
Until a sharp rap called him to the door,
And there without the bishop’s servant stood.
“ My lord is sinking, and has sent for you :
Do not delay, or you may be too late.”
The caution was not needed, for the youth
Soon kneeled beside his dying patron’s bed ;
And he was calm the while that failing hand
He pressed within his own, and dared to use
The filial language always in his heart.
“ My father ! O my father ! speak to me.
Have you not now one little word for me ?
It is by your command that I am here.”
“ ’Tis well, my son. I’ve nursed you in the faith,
And I have sent for you that you may list
My latest wishes and my solemn charge.

All is in order for your college course,
But other lips must tell you what my own
Too long delayed to do. My time is short,
Therefore my words must sacred be and few.
If called to feed God's flock, as you'll appear
Before their Shepherd on the numbering day,
Be faithful to your trust. O Claude ! my son !
I have been thrilled with your sweet singing here :
May I but hear it yonder ! Watch and pray.
I have not sung on earth ; perchance in heaven
I may be feebly heard in angel choir.
Or, if those sing the best who love the most
And have been most forgiven, my new song,
According with the Magdalene's, may soar
On crystal sea above the harps of God.
And, Claude, one promise. When these poor remains
Are taken through the streets to their long home,
Do you before the coaches walk and sing.
Sing with the trumpet's triumph in your breath,
The clarion's martial ardour ; for I change
The battle-songs of earth for the acclaim
Of the glad angels and the victor's shout.
Moan not o'er *me* sad dirges. For He lives !
The world's Redeemer lives ! and I shall *stand*.
'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' Oh, what more !
Well, no more here. But promise me you'll sing,
And I will take my farewell satisfied."

Claude promised 'mid his tears. The bishop blessed,

Spreading his hands above him ; then he clasped
His head round with both arms, and, mouth to mouth,
Kissed him, as if his own, for long good-bye.
That over, he dismissed him, feeling faint.
It was a mortal faintness, for that night
The silver cord was loosëd, and next morn
The many mourners went about the streets.

Heavy as Claude's heart was the funeral morn,
The fog laid o'er the city like a pall ;
Dark were the streets and cold the atmosphere,
Searching the damp ; and so the mother feared
And trembled for her boy, but begged in vain
That he would break the promise he had given.
“ Oh, Claude, if his dear lordship had foreseen
This day had been unhealthy, not a fear
That he would e'er have sanctioned such a risk !
Now, for the love of me, in silence walk ;
No one will blame you who respects your life.”
Claude kissed her silently, and journeyed forth,
Obedient less to the dear living voice
Than to the dead. Before the palace gates
The concourse thronged. He, taking the first stand,
Saw in a mourning coach the Lady Greys.
At last the sad procession formed, it moved ;
And struggled through the heavy air, that seemed
Like an opposing enemy, the voice
That in the minster had such thrilling power—
“ I know that my Redeemer liveth ; and

Though worms destroy this body, yet—
Yet in my flesh shall I see God."

And so he sang, and sang, nor ceased his strain
Until the mourners stood around the vault ;
And then the task was o'er—the deed of love
Performed, even to its last requirement.
But why that start? and why that blanching cheek ?
He felt as if a knife went through his breast,
Piercing him cruelly at every breath :
A momentary pain, too sharp to last,
Not to be noticed in this solemn hour.
Ah ! know you not, the finest instruments
Get all untuned by atmospheric change ;
It matters not, your skill may set them right.
But when the vocal instrument's at fault,
Its cells, its tubes are all beyond your reach :
You mayn't attune its discords, nor force back
The gush of sound that once was heard at will.
You may renew your harp-strings when they break,
But who shall bind the breaking strings of life ?
No more ! Ah ! never more the minster boy
Shall swell his notes above the organ's roll,
While, as the people, even the priest, shall stand
In solemn rapture till the anthem's o'er !
No more ! Ah ! never more the waves of Wear
Shall give the music of their silver flow
To his sweet singing in the woods at eve !
No more ! Ah ! never more in crowded streets
Shall he be heard before the good man's hearse.

No more! no more! Ah, never, never more!

“ I sung my last that day. Ah! if she knew
That it was thus with me, would she not weep?
Would she not send one message of regret,
One word of farewell or of pious hope?
‘ If not on earth, in Heaven’ would she not?
And He will take me in my life’s young morn,
When growing brightness seemed to presage noon
When I had hoped to be an overseer
In the fair temple built of living stones,
And felt the office sacred, though at times,
Earthly desires *have* mingled with the good!
What have I lived for? Thou, O God, hast seen!
Oh, blot out my offences from Thy book!
Present repentance mayn’t retrieve past sin,
But there’s forgiveness even for the worst.
My mother’s hope! And is she called to close
These weary lids when fades away the world?
O Christ! who once gave back the widow’s dead,
Comfort my mother in her sore distress.”
“ My boy, He will. But, Claude, you will forgive,
If I should ask you of this youthful love.
What is her name? Ah, do not be reserved,
For I will send and bring her to your side.”
At this she won the secret of his grief,
And with the maiden’s name her high estate;
While he entreated of her much despatch,
For that he felt the end was very near.

" What were you doing, to love one so high,
So much above you, as this Lily Grey?
How dare I send? You know not what you ask."
He answered not, but, turning to the wall,
Gave a low groan that almost broke her heart.
" Nay, do not grieve, your wish shall be obeyed.
I'll write at once, but to the Lady Grey."
And thus she wrote—

" Madam, your humble friend
Would, with a mother's love, indulgence crave
For the blind passion of her only boy,
A youth, sixteen, who for four years has nursed
For your sweet child a secret, constant flame:
Pure as a vestal lamp the love still burns.
Can you forgive the dying, that he longs
To see once more the maiden of his dreams?
For since the day he chanted through the streets,
Claude has declined a victim to his gift."

Now, how did Lady Grey peruse this note?
Did her eye darken and her fine lip curl?
Did she turn round and chide her guileless child
For being loved by a plebeian boy?
Oh no! the spirit she was of was true
To its impression on her countenance,
Outvying ev'n that beauty. She was meek
Of heart and lowly: could respect herself,
But with herself all others of her sex,
Who morally were worthy her regard.

“ Poor mother ! and he is your only child.
So gifted too ! ” And then she gently broke
To Lily the sad purport of the note.
Nor did she seek to stay her burning tears ;
But when she said, “ Oh, let me go to him ! ”
At once replied, “ With me, my love, you shall.”
So round that dying couch, that night, there stood
All whom the youth held precious in the world :
And Lily, bending o'er him, softly spoke—
But “ Oh, Claude ! Claude ! ” was all her lips could
frame.

Now he might tell his love, and there came sobs
As deep from Lily's mother as his own,
While he disclosed the secret of his life :
The spell of Lily's voice, as oft he stood
Beneath her window at the evening hour ;
His high ambition, and the smile that fired ;
His troublous path, and the kind hand that smoothed ;
And all the future seemed to hold in store
Before his strength was weakened in the way.
And as the story ended, and each one
Bent down in turn to those poor bloodless lips,
And Lily last one lingering, passionate kiss
Pressed down on them, his spirit passed their bounds,
To stir an ampler air with the new song
That never shall be hushed by earthly damps.
And where he sings no music chord lies mute,
Or harp-string flies beneath a touch too tense.
O air divine ! supernal harmonies !

If the faint echoes from inspired souls
Can so entrance us here, what must it be
To join in the full chorus? To hear rise
The thrilling octaves, till they pierce the heights
That long progression only can attain?
And vibrate to the deep, majestic bass
That thunders 'mid the depths, like ocean stirred
And clapping its white hands to heaven for joy?

When they had laid him in his lonely grave
Within the minster's shadow, Lady Grey
Took his poor mother to her own bright home;
Nor deemed this living stone too mean to set
Where gleamed the pearl and opal. For she saw
In the meek soul a mind that bore the impress
Of culture, as by long inheritance;
And well might add its own nobility
To that of her dead husband's pious line
To doubly dower Claude, and make the gold
That lacked the "guinea stamp" shine with the light
That burnished its Golconda. She was glad
To press the cup of friendship to her lips,
For she had known its comfort. So they lived,
"Partakers of like precious faith" and hope;
And Lily was a daughter to them both.

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